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MEN AND STEEL

BY

MARY HEATON VORSE

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MEN AND STEEL

BOOKS BY

MARY HEATON VORSE

THE PRESTONS

GROWING UP

THE NINTH MAN

MEN AND STEEL

BY

MARY HEATON VORSE

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MEN AND STEEL

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PART ONE
STRIKE BACKGROUND

MEN AND STEEL

CHAPTER I

THE PRINCIPALITY OF STEEL

PRINCIPALITIES in America do not exist as geographical areas. In America principalities exist by industries.

The principality of Steel is young. It has the despotism and the power of youth; its power rests only on wealth and dominion. Power without responsibility. Power which throttles among its subjects all efforts at self-government. Power brutal, young, riotous, lusty, driven by the force of steam. Power which treats men's lives as commodities. A creative thing made of fire and iron and taking no account of the lives of men. Smoke, fire, iron and human lives are its substance. Gain and greed and the sullen discontent of men are the stuff from which this unthinking despotism is made.

The men who have iron prevail. The iron masters have always had power. The smiths have always been the aristocrats of the artisans. America of the Indians might yet dispute the civilization of Europe, as does North

Africa, had the Indians had iron. Iron and Steel began the life of moderns. Iron and Steel still rule.

No industry is as imposing as Steel, no industry so knocks at the door of the imagination. There must have been a time when that piece of molten metal made from a stone seemed magic; it still is so.

The magic has grown.

The might of Steel has increased.

This industry has progressed mightily. There is no prouder achievement in American industry than Steel. In manufacture of Steel we surpass the world. Sheffield is an old man in his dotage. Newcastle sleeps. Pittsburgh is To-day making To-morrow.

The steel towns make all the raw stuff of life as we know it. Here are our great forges. Here is the core of our civilization. They make steel cars in Lyndora. They make rails in Monessen. In all the world there are no such tubing works as in Youngstown and McKeesport.

In the steel towns they make the raw material for all the swift moving things; the wheels of great machines, the engines which move trains and vessels and airships, the frame-work of high buildings. Our civilization is forged in the steel towns.

A rampart of mills lines the river bottoms near all steel towns. These mills stretch in a mighty frieze miles long. The men who go in mornings and come out nights, who go in nights and come out mornings, seem like processions of ants.

Smoke belches perpetually from the black mill chimneys,

which rise like the pipes of black organs, three chimneys, five chimneys, seven chimneys in a row. Chimney and furnace follow one another along the rivers.

The fires of these mills burn night and day. Night and day steel is made by the men who live huddled around the flanks of the mills.

Through the work of these men Pittsburgh grew strong and built high towers. Town after town made steel; one mill bred another. Youngstown, Johnstown, Wheeling, Steubenville made steel and iron, or things that were made from steel and iron.

Steel grew powerful and great. Steel blackened the skies of South Chicago; Steel built Gary and the towns in Calumet Basin. Steel was made in Joliet; Allentown grew rich on Steel, and Steel was made in Colorado and Alabama.

A great industry flung itself across a continent. Through the ceaseless energy of the steel masters and through the unfailing faithfulness of the men who went to the mills every morning and every night, a principality was built.

If these men stopped working our civilization would stop. Between them coal and iron hold America in their hands. Coal and iron and steel rule our civilization and are its masters.

Ore Mines

They make steel from piles of red dust—the crushed ore. These are the places where the iron-ore comes from:

Marquette
Menominee
Gogebic
Vermilion
Mesaba

It is like a song. Much of the ore from which they make fine steel comes from Mesaba. The Mesaba range is a crescent of towns and mines flung over sixty miles of pit-scarred country, open pits yawning, open pits half a mile across, red as dried blood, pits so deep that the engines crawling up their flanks look like beetles. Pits the color of burnt umber, streaked with rust, streaked with yellow. Around the pits forest fires have left the charred stumps of great trees. Among the burnt stumps are bowlders strewn there by glaciers. There are nine beautiful towns and fifty bleak "locations" squatting about the flanks of the mines.

When I was on the Mesaba Range there was a strike. At that time I saw drunken gunmen wearing the stars of deputy sheriffs guarding company property. These were on Indian Reservation where no drink is allowed.

There were no houses in this location, only cabins made from logs and the sides of square oil cans. There were

no streets in this town. The cabins were placed haphazard among stumps and bowlders. The company owned the single pump. The company owned the land under the cabins. Refuse lay where it fell, and hogs rooted in it. But the women who stood at the doorways were wide-bosomed and clean. Their curtains in the windows were clean and they grew flowers from tin cans. I saw one cabin which had a piece of stained glass above the door.

Past the cabins went the drunken gunmen; one held himself up on the arm of the other and shouted:

"I don't know if I'm coming or going. I don't know if it's night or morning."

They saw me and cursed at me foully. On this location two Italians had been sentenced to a year's imprisonment for bringing red wine here to drink at table.

Coal, Coke and Carriers

From the Mesaba mines railways take the ore to Duluth. Long, ungainly ore boats ferry it across the lakes. These rails and these boats are owned and controlled by the iron masters.

They are digging coal to smelt this ore in Pennsylvania. As you go through the country you cannot forget coal, you cannot forget that underneath the earth men work night and day.

In Connelsville the coke ovens burn with red licking fires to make coke for the blast. They burn night and day.

At night the river runs red where it passes Connelsville.

The steel masters own and control the iron mines. The coal and coke to smelt the ore they own and control.

All these things—the mines, the railways and the boats—belong to those who own the ramparts of the mills. They also own the men who work in the mills. But if the men mining coal and making steel stopped, then life as we know it would cease.

Profits

About one half of the steel industry is owned by the U. S. Steel Corporation. These are the figures of the Corporation's surplus:

1913 Total undivided surplus	$151,798,428.89
1914 Total undivided surplus	135,204,471.90
1915 Total undivided surplus	180,025,328.74
1916 Total undivided surplus	381,360,913.37
1917 Total undivided surplus	431,660,803.63
1918 Total undivided surplus	466,888,421.38
1919 Total undivided surplus	493,048,201.93

Compared with the wage budgets in 1918, the Corporation's final surplus after paying dividends of $96,382,027 and setting aside $174,277,835 for Federal taxes payable in 1919, was $466,888,421—a sum large enough to have paid a second time the total wage and salary budget for 1918 ($452,663,524), and to have left a surplus of over $14,000,000. In 1919 the undivided surplus was $493,-048,201.93, or $13,000,000 more than the total wage and salary expenditures.*

* Interchurch Report of Steel Strike.

CHAPTER II

STEEL MILLS

IN the steel towns the mills are surrounded by high walls. The gates are guarded by uniformed guards. You must have a permit to go in. A man may live years in steel towns and see no more of the mills than smoke and steam.

The yards of the steel mills are surrounded by tracks. Engines puff up and down through the twenty-four hours. Mountains of ore, mountains of coke, trains unloading, scrap engines unloading ore and coke, trains carrying off steel bars. Magnets everywhere are loading and unloading steel ingots into cars. Men moving in unhurried fashion. No one moves rapidly; every one has time. There is a never-ending quality to all this.

The size, the leisure, the intensity of the fires and the furnaces give the illusion of ritual. Rooms as high as the apse of a cathedral, with a core of molten-metal furnace, poured steel, red hot steel bars. Through the gloom shafts of blue light from outside, shafts of sunlight solid as searchlights, while little unhurried men, small men whose presence is scarcely observed, are standing on platforms pulling levers.

Three things impress you when you go into the mills: the size, the absence of men, the absence of haste. Here a tremendous work is in progress. Here is being manufactured the steel skeleton of our monstrous civilization. Here before your eyes you may see it being made from fire and iron with the help of great machines. That is what you think first.

Later you say, "Oh, men are helping too!" This is an after-thought.

Poured Iron and Steel

There is no glory comparable to poured iron or poured steel. The gushing out of fiery metal from a great wheel-like container seems like the beginning of Creation. This black container of molten iron is twenty feet high. A ladle advances on an overhead railway. It travels to the container of molten iron. It moves forward on its track and then laterally and then down. The black container swings around slowly on its axle as a man presses a lever.

Then follows the sudden magnificence of poured metal. Like giant fireworks, a thousand sparks fly from it, a river of white fire throwing off cascades of stars, a fiery shower on all sides. On a greasy platform above the ladle are the men who operate it. They look down with indifference into its seething deadly brightness.

My guide said: "A man fell into that once, and they buried him and all the tons of metal. Right here they held the burial service."

The story of the man who fell into the vat of molten metal and became part of it obsesses the men's minds. I have heard it told in different ways.

They tell you of a man made into iron rails, of another who went into the structure of great buildings.

This story is as old as time. There was a great bell once which was cast and re-cast and would not ring true until a human being was sacrificed to it.

Open-Hearth Furnace

Very slowly, with caution as though afraid of spilling its contents, the ladle moves on its track, away from the container. It moves laterally to the open-hearth furnace. A gigantic hook descends from above as though of its own intelligence. It hooks itself under the rim of the ladle; the door of the furnace lifts up. You look in into the intolerable white glare. The red flames seem dark. The red flames seem to be the brothers of smoke, beside the white incandescence of the molten mass that will become steel.

I would rather see steel poured than hear a great orchestra. The furious hallelujah of the blast furnace gives you the impression of sound.

When you stare at the glory of the open furnace and see the molten metal giving forth its shower of sparks, you are witnessing creation. Worlds have been made with the intolerable glory of fire. In this fashion, too, our modern world has been created.

The ladle of iron pours crackling into the open-hearth furnace. Before the furnace are mounds of manganese and of other metals of which the steel is made. I asked an old Welsh steel worker: "What is in steel?"

He stamped his foot on the earth. "Everything in that is steel," he said. "There is naught you wouldn't find in steel." It seemed to him that it was a cosmic creation.

Force is confined in these furnaces; from one moment to another it may escape its bounds, from one moment to another fire may cease to be docile to men's wills, fire will

destroy instead of create. It does destroy. Steel falls where there is water and explodes. Furnaces explode. The steel towns are full of tales of disaster, and as though in warning, the men's clothes are speckled with burns from glancing sparks of poured metal. You are forever conscious that this force working for man is trying to escape.

In many steel mills all that human ingenuity can do to prevent disaster has been done. There are two facts against which no safety device can guard: fire burns, and men forget.

Blooming Mill

The red ingots weighing a ton are carried deliberately on the moving track, from soaking pit to blooming mill. The mill is lofty and dark and the fiery metal is like a red eye. The red-eyed ingot, the green spitting fire of the lever, are the only light things in the twilight. Blue light from an opening in the roof pours down solid like a curtain and shuts off the vista of the mill.

The man on the platform pushes a lever; the hot steel bar is hurled forward and crashes beneath the roller. Bristling iron tongues, like iron fingers, turn it over. The man pushes the lever and unchains the force that carries the steel bar back. It seems like a tortured thing. There is anguish in the force that compresses the great bar of glowing steel. Again it is dashed forward and again the steel fingers turn it over. The force here unchained is so great that it holds an element of terror.

The roar of the blooming mill and of the rolling mill, the hum of machinery, the crackling and spitting of the electric levers never stop. So constant is the noise that it gives the effect of quiet.

Poured iron, open-hearth furnace, poured steel, soaking pit, blooming mill, rolling mill, gray steel still smoking hot, bars of steel piled ready for use—this is the sequence of the mill which goes on night and day like some process of nature. It seems too inevitable to be man's invention. The little slow men seem the servants of the great forces of fire and iron.

Wire Mill

Wire is lengthened by running rapidly in long loops over pegs. It forms streaks of fire that seem to move of their own volition—fiery snakes, writhing and leaping, running on endlessly forever. They daze you as they rush before you. It does not seem possible that these things are not alive.

Behind is the gloomy mill, in front brilliant moving wire. Slow moving laborers pass with loaded barrows; they seem hypnotized by monotony, by the leaping red serpents. Without stopping, this thin line of fire runs on night and day; night and day men tend them in their courses. This thin, long line of writhing red fire is one of the most beautiful things in the world—a leaping ribbon of flame, yard on yard of it, looping and twisting. This happy, leaping, running, twisting, flame-colored wire makes iron fences when it is cold.

The Skull Cracker

Behind the walls of the same steel mill are the skull-cracker and the wire mill.

I found the skull-cracker by chance down the end of a muddy lane one spring day. It was at the very end of the mill. A narrow railway track runs to it and brings pieces of steel refuse to be cracked over and fed back into the furnaces.

These great fragments of gray steel look old as time; they look like pieces of extinct worlds. They look as though they must have been fused in the heart of some long extinct volcano. It does not seem possible that they were made only yesterday in the furnaces above. They are unloaded from the car, which brings them by a huge circular magnet. The magnet reaches over and touches the fragment of gray metal and places it where it wishes. The current is turned on again and the magnet touches a sphere of steel weighing five tons, and draws it up forty feet in the air; the current is turned off and the steel sphere falls upon the fragment below and cracks it.

It looks like some strange game—the magnet picking up the gray ball, dropping it and then picking it up, and loading and unloading the steel.

The skull-cracker is in a little yard by itself, out of doors. There are three men in the crew. The craneman pulls the levers which work the great crane to which the magnet is attached, the laborer does what manual work there is, and the foreman looks on.

Wages and Hours

The United States Steel Corporation's policy as regards labor dominates the steel industry.

There are, roughly speaking, 500,000 steel workers in the United States.

191,000 employees work in U. S. Steel Corporation's manufacturing plants.

32% do not make enough pay to come to the level set by Government experts as minimum subsistence standard for family of five.

72% of all steel workers are below the level set by Government experts as minimum of comfort level set for families of five. That means that three-quarters of the steel workers cannot earn enough for an American standard of living.

50% of the U. S. Steel Corporation's employees work 12 hours a day. 50% of these work 7 days a week.

Steel workers work from 20 to 40 hours longer a week than other basic industries near steel communities.

American steel workers work over 20 hours a week longer than British steel workers.*

*Interchurch Report of Steel Strike.

CHAPTER III

MEN AND MACHINES

Spring in a Steel Town

FROM the skull-cracker and out of the mill I walked through muddy unpaved lanes, past unlovely littered yards of workers' houses. Only the foreman of the skull-cracker had made a small garden behind the mill gate. One young Slovak was digging to plant things in front of his frame cottage.

The mills of this town were on the flat river bottom. The old river banks mount steeply. The yards of the rickety frame houses slope sharply down. Melting snow had uncovered the refuse of winter. In the air was the sickly sweet smell of rotting garbage. The steep yards were surrounded by ramshackle fences. At the bottom near the street heavier things had slipped down hill—discarded bed springs, coal scuttles with holes in them, rusty pots and pans, old corsets, shoes, and more tin cans. In these towns on the Monongahela refuse and garbage are not taken away. For months it rots where it lies. Spring finds it there.

In my country there is a dreary spot which we call the

town dump. Here it seems that the children of Lazarus have been keeping house.

There are disabled cook-stoves, old beds leaking their entrails, ruined cook pots, ruined scuttles, ruined buckets. Old hats, old corsets and old shoes. Little boys with wheel-barrows come and throw away things down the dump which is over the steep side of a dune.

Spring uncovers thousands of such places in the steel towns.

Order for the machines; disorder for the men who tend them. Man's affairs are dwarfed outside the mills as men are dwarfed in the mills.

On one hillside was a single irregular patch of green. Some hopeful soul beside the foreman of the skull-cracker had planted a garden in the midst of the tin cans and refuse. There was the only sign of spring in that town.

Men Going to Work

The steel workers were streaming from the mills. Night and morning the streets of all steel towns are black with steel workers swarming up from the river bottom, streaming down the hillsides. They come on trolleys—special cars bring the steel workers. The men going to work walk with their heads down. They lurch as if heavy with sleep. They walk fast; they don't talk; they look neither to the right nor to the left, but with heads down they plunge forward as though the mill gates sucked them in.

They meet the shift coming off. The men are worn with fatigue and their eyes are hollow, but they chat together. They are going home to food and to bed.

Men coming, men going. Day shift, night shift. Ten hours light, fourteen night. This procession is punctual as the tide. It never stops. It goes in every morning, it comes out every night. Like the sun, like the tides, it knows neither holiday nor Sunday.

It does not seem as if men owned the mills. It seems as if the mills owned the men. The mill gates open up in the morning and suck the men in and at night they open up again and spew them out. As you go through towns this idea becomes an obsession.

Fraycar

There was a man named Fraycar who, when he was drunk, would come down before the mill gates and would curse the mills; he would curse slag and slack; he would curse the mill bosses and the men who worked; he would curse the pouring steel and the fires, and the smoke that poured out of the mills and blackened the sky. His friends would follow him and watch him fearfully as he stood, huge, before the mill gates, cursing. He would cry out to the silent wall:

"I am stronger than you."

As he drank in the saloon a fury would overtake him and he would begin to talk of the mill, and then he would rush out, and behind him there would be silence, no one would laugh. He would curse the mills and furnaces; he would curse the machines; he cursed slag and slack. When he was drunk he thought the machines were alive, he thought they owned him and that he was their slave.

The Mad Gunner

You will find repeated again and again the illusion that the machines have a life of their own.

In France I heard a variation of Fraycar's story. There was a wounded man whose head had been hit by shrapnel. He had been a gunner of one of the great guns. He thought that he had a tremendous secret and he would stop his nurse and the visitors and the doctor because he feared that he might die and with him his secret would perish. The secret was this:

It was that the machines, in revenge for the work that we made them do, were killing men. He thought that machines were alive and that they were malevolently disposed to men.

"Stop making machines," he would cry, "and you will stop war."

He believed that the great gun had not been obedient to him, but that he and the other men of the gun crew obeyed the great gun and did its bidding.

CHAPTER IV

STEEL TOWNS

Braddock

CIVILIZATIONS write their history in terms of buildings. Towns name their aspirations and testify to their failures in brick and mortar. In the slums of cities civilization writes with stones and wood the story of its defeat. Each generation through its palaces names its ruler and its deity. Our noblest temples are built in the service of transportation, and the towers of industry laugh at the church spires.

Streets and the houses on them cannot lie, nor do the crowds which walk down them tell anything but truth.

For nearly half a century Coal and Steel have owned great districts of Pennsylvania, Indiana, Ohio, Illinois. For nearly half a century Steel has been writing its own history in the houses and factories of its towns.

Braddock is one of the oldest steel towns. Here Carnegie Steel was born. Its mills existed before the great mills of Homestead. A ganglion of towns—Braddock, Rankin, Homestead, Bessemer, lined the Monongahela River with steel mills.

All of Braddock is black. The soot of the mills has

covered it. There is no spot in Braddock that is fair to see. It has neither park nor playground. It is a town of slack disorder and of scant self-respect. Those who have made money in Braddock mills live where they cannot see Braddock. The steel workers who can, escape up the hillsides. They go to North Braddock or to Wolftown; but many and many of them live and die in the First Ward.

They live some in two-story brick houses, some in blackened frame dwellings. One set of houses faces the street, the other the court. The courts are bricked and littered with piles of cans, piles of rubbish, bins of garbage, hillocks of refuse—refuse and litter, litter and refuse. Playing in the refuse and ashes and litter—children. The decencies of life ebb away as one nears the mills. I passed one day along an alley which fronted on an empty lot. Here the filth and refuse of years had been churned into viscous mud. A lean dog was digging. Pale children paddled in the squashy filth and made playthings of ancient rubbish. Beyond was the railroad tracks, beyond that the mills. Two-storied brick houses flanked the brick street. No green thing grew anywhere.

But in the brick courtyard Croatian and Slovak women were weaving rugs. In their villages in Europe they had woven the clothes of their men. In Braddock's squalid courtyards they weave bright colored rugs and sing as they weave. Here and there men bring tables out of doors and play cards. They nod to me in village fashion as I pass. Everywhere were children—Slovak children with flaxen

hair and blue eyed; wide-faced Magyar children, Gypsy children. Then I knew that the chief product of Braddock and its sister towns was not steel.

Their principal product is children.

Generation after generation of children, born where no green thing grows. Hundreds and thousands of children playing in the refuse of forsaken brick courtyards or along the streets. Generations of children reared under the somber magnificence of the clouds of smoke which blanket the sky and obscure the sun.

I learned in Braddock what condemns men to live in these tenements on the river bottom where the slack from the mills rains on them.

What condemns them to live here is their children. The more children the less the chance of escape. Here in these Braddock houses live the people of eternally unfulfilled dreams, here live those whose hopes forever are betrayed by the unforeseen, the people without a margin.

I know two men, Milko and Pasterik. They came to this country together, a generation ago. Pasterik has escaped to Wolftown and owns a square box of a house. From his windows he can see the yellow water of the Monongahela. Milko lives among the condemned in the courtyard off Willow Way. He explained this to me.

"Missus," he said, "my friend Pasterik get ten children. I get eleven. Four of his children die by diphtheria all together. He can go—he can buy house. My children, they all live."

Slack

Slack covers everything. It sifts in everywhere. Slack is what doesn't melt in the mountains of red ore—a metal particle, powdered ore, powdered metal. It silts down all growing things. You can see the tiny bits of ore gleaming on your hands. The shining ore dusts your coat. It gets in your hair.

On certain days they blow the slack out. Mighty currents of air blow the choking slack out of the costly mill chimneys onto the cheap human life outside. Those days the sun is darkened, and the steel workers returning home hide their faces as from a sand storm. They duck along, jackets over heads, under the fury of the falling slack. You find it everywhere. It lodges in the creases of your clothes. Your hands are never clean. Nothing, between soot and slack, can be clean long in the steel towns.

I have a friend who lives six miles from Braddock. Every night she sweeps off her piazza; every morning you walk across it you leave footprints in the slack fallen during the night.

The smoke is not merely a stupendous background for the flaming mills. It means work for anonymous women in thousands of ramshackle homes, hard work, never ceasing work. The men come home with oil-drenched clothes for the women to wash, the soot and slack drift into the houses, night and day, for the women to scrub.

The Flag of Defiance

The women in the steel towns fly a flag of defiance against the dirt. It is their white window curtains. You cannot go into any foul courtyard without finding white lace curtains stretched to dry on frames. Wherever you go, in Braddock or in Homestead or in filthy Rankin, you will find courageous women hopefully washing their white curtains. There is no woman so driven with work that she will not attempt this decency.

It is the way these women have of reassuring themselves against the drifting soot and the slack sifting in by night and by day. It is their way of saying, "I love cleanliness and beauty." One could write a tragedy about these window curtains. They have become to these women a fixed idea. They wash their sash curtains every week, and this in towns where the water must be carried in buckets from courtyards.

I saw only one house where the curtains were filthy in the steel towns. It was a signal of defeat, a flag at half mast. It was in the house of a young woman whose oval face had a yellow pallor. She had a very young baby, and at its birth she had blood poisoning. Now she was barely able to do the most necessary things for her children and her husband. The room was in disorder. The glowing spirit that marks so many of the Slovak homes did not exist. Life pressed her too hard. She was swimming against a tide too strong for her. As a signal of her defeat, even the curtains were dirty.

I learned this winter the difference between two rooms and four. Two rooms means no privacy for any one. Four rooms means decency and a home. I learned that a house without running water means slavery for the woman living in it. This winter in Braddock and in the steel towns in Alleghany County I saw women washing clothes in icy courtyards. I saw old women carrying buckets of water from pumps. I have seen courtyards where lived thirty-four families; they had but two faucets of water in the court. I saw young mothers walk out in the snow for water. I have seen them bent over from carrying buckets of water. There were many families where the woman washed the clothes of her boarders, as well as those of her family.

These women spend their lives in an effort to keep clean. It is unavailing; it is hard for any one—soot and slack fall night and day and never stop; there is a fine scum of blackness over everything. I have heard people say:

"Why do they live crowded in such places? Why do the steel workers live in the filthy courtyards without running water, without conveniences? Why don't they move?" I heard a woman ask a priest this.

"Where can they move to?" he asked. "If a man is working in the Edgar Thompson works, he must live in Braddock; if he is working for the Carnegie Steel Company in Homestead, he must live in Homestead. If you look around and try to hire a better place, you will find there is none. They cannot move unless they buy."

Pittsburg

Pittsburg is shaped like the prow of a vessel. At the point where the Monongahela and the Allegheny Rivers flow together it seems to be cleaving up stream in their embrace.

It is as though the business of Pittsburg were on an island. As you come down the river Pittsburg presents a sky line which recalls New York; its high towers, commemorating the steel industries, search the skies. There is a tingle of life in the air; it is one of the spots on the earth which bubbles and boils and stews with vitality. Something here is being created. You cannot forget by day or by night that Pittsburg makes steel. By day a cloud of smoke tells you this, and the fiery rivers by night.

As you look you may read in Pittsburg's streets and Pittsburg's rivers the history of this part of the country.

There was here first a trading post since it was a meeting place of rivers; traders came from the north and met those who came up from the Mississippi River.

The Pennsylvania Dutch made a comfortable city on the site of the French traders. Then came steel and built a clamorous city.

Pittsburg is built up sheer hills. If people tell you Pittsburg is not beautiful do not believe them. It is beautiful in a new way. Its rivers at night run greasy like molten metal in whirlpools of fire—whorls and spirals of fire from the plant furnaces shatter the night of Pittsburg skies.

All around Pittsburg are parks where the people live who make the money from industry.

The people who make the steel live crowded on the south side—they live in homes clinging to hillsides. You see their shanties in the bottom of sudden gulches.

Youngstown

Youngstown is a yawning pit where they make steel, surrounded by houses. The Youngstown steel works join those of East Youngstown. You may ride for miles on the trolley and all the while you will look down on the tubing works. The might of steel is more visible in Youngstown than anywhere else. Beside Youngstown the works in Braddock, the steel works in Pittsburg, the great Homestead works are but a beginning: these were the seeds; Youngstown is the fulfillment. This river of steel works runs from the works of Girard, across to Steelton and marches up to East Youngstown miles away, a mighty procession of chimney and blast furnaces.

In Youngstown one can look down on the steel yards and realize their extent. They are so large that they match the open pit mines whose size dwarfs men to ants and engines to crawling beetles. You stand on the hillside and watch the ceaseless activity. All day the yard engines puff back and forth; all day the rows of chimneys belch flame. By night Youngstown's sky is incandescent with the magnificence of the never-ending blasts; by night it looks as though the end of the world were at hand.

Youngstown's main streets are full of shops. A river of people flows down these streets perpetually. They come from Central Europe; they come from Russia; the Baltic and the Balkan states meet on Youngstown streets, and go shopping together. By night they drift down the street seeking pleasure. The people have not elbow room; they swarm over one another. Saturday afternoon there is an air of holiday abroad. The town vibrates with a vitality that does not know where to spend itself.

Up on the hillside are long streets filled with the homes of the rich people. The steel workers talk about these people; the steel workers tell you fantastic stories about the lives of the rich men of their town; they tell you these stories with disapproval. In the last twenty years steel millionaires made money quickly in Youngstown, and they made a great deal, and some of the men who made these fortunes bit into life like greedy children; the workers think that all of them have done that, for among them you hear only fantastic tales of the men whose policies shape the workers' destinies.

In East Youngstown life is scraped down to the bone: there are the mills, there are the workers—and formerly there were the saloons. There is nothing else. Here are no fine houses, only the steel workers' dwellings. Most of them are ugly frame buildings, climbing muddy streets.

In East Youngstown you realize that men are here not to live but to tend the mills. Humanity is dwarfed; the machines which make the industry are exalted. In East Youngstown is nothing but steel; there is a pillar of cloud

by day and there is a saffron glare in the sky by night that forever reminds you of this.

East Youngstown has a special flavor of its own. There is a hope here that there is not in Braddock. The crowds that swarm the main streets and fill the moving picture shows are young and lusty.

But the races that mingle on Youngstown streets, who drank together in the saloons, who play together in the poolrooms, who fill the moving picture theaters, and who shop together in Youngstown's shops, make something else beside steel.

They are talking over many things together. They do not know what they want—they do not want what they have. This talk goes on all the time; it goes on as perpetually and inevitably as does the making of steel; it keeps time with the rolling smoke by day and with the fury of the fiery sky by night.

In 1916 the discontent welled over. From one day to another Youngstown was on strike. No one knew why; there were no leaders. From one day to another men quit work and streamed down the streets. The mills stopped. There was rioting. Strikers were killed. Houses were burned. The strike flared up like a furnace blast. Like the fire of the blast furnace their discontent has never gone out.

The New Towns

There is a part of Youngstown called Steelton, near the Ohio Works. During the war houses were built here that looked as though fitted for human habitation. In Steelton you may see nice houses with five and six rooms, houses of concrete, neat frame houses with gas burners in the kitchens. There is space for a garden.

There is a distance of generations between Steelton and Braddock. Wherever you go you can tell the age of a steel town by the quality of houses.

In the town of Gary, Indiana, the steel masters spoke their minds in terms of the twentieth century. In Gary there are school systems the world knows about; there are playgrounds and there are baseball fields.

But, there is one thing in common in all these towns. Meritorious East Pittsburg, Steelton with its comparative decencies, bleak Lyndora, Rankin stewing over the mills, Braddock, and Homestead of the foul courtyards, Gary and Youngstown—have all one overwhelming motive: Man is puny; Industry great.

CHAPTER V

STEEL AND LABOR

Old Organizations

IN every community there is some dominant thought. If you look for it, there is some moral value expressed in the structure of the houses and in the plan of the town.

A roaring oil town, a new mining camp, spill out their naïve stories of greed and adventure.

I have seen Pennsylvania Dutch towns which proclaimed in every brick, standards of comfortable decency. You may read New Bedford's history in one street. Portuguese negroes from the Western Islands live in the beautiful dilapidated houses of dead sea captains—they work in the mills.

The atmosphere around Pittsburg towns is one of arrogant indifference to human beings. There is here, too, an atmosphere of repression. A generation ago the steel masters said "hush" to the workers, and they were obeyed.

When steel began to grow along the rivers the men organized. There was a time when Labor had a say in the steel industry. In very early times the puddlers spoke for their rights. In the fifties they organized into

the Sons of Vulcan. This was a proud organization; its men were fighters. Other organizations arose in the steel industry, which all combined later in the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel and Tin Workers. The men in this organization held their heads up and took off their hats to no one; they were arrogant men, and their existence was a thorn in the side of the iron masters, who, in those days, bargained with them.

Steel then grew great. The United States Steel Corporation merged steel into a principality. To-day there are 191,000 steel workers who draw pay checks from this one great company. When the steel masters organized themselves, they decided to crush their workers' organization.

Up to 1892 there were shifting conflicts. The steel masters fought organized labor in two ways. They used the weapon of the lockout, and they used the weapon of espionage. Espionage grew powerful throughout the mills. No one could tell where Judas sat. The air was poisoned by the presence of spies. It is still poisoned.

In the Homestead strike of 1892, another weapon was used. The steel companies used armed detectives. Many strikers were shot to death. They routed the strikers and, by 1896, all unionism in the steel mills was crushed for a generation. For a generation spies watched the workers and union men were told to go.

This was called the "open shop system" and the "free right of individual contract."

So the government of the steel industry grew more autocratic than that of an absolute monarchy.

Two rights existed to the peoples of despotic countries of all times. One was the right of petition. If the people had something they wished their king to know they could tell him. Their petition was read by him and he replied to it.

The United States Steel Corporation is more autocratic. It denies the men who work for it the right of petition—for principle's sake.

The people in autocratic monarchies had another right which custom gave them. This was the right of demonstration. They could voice their grievances to their rulers by this means.

They may not do this in the steel country—the employer's principles are against this.

The United States Steel Corporation will not communicate with the representatives of men whom it employs. It will not discuss with them those things which make up the fabric of their lives. It will not bargain with labor.

The United States Government meets the representatives of labor. The United States Steel Corporation will not.

Freedom and Welfare

For a long time men and ore were on one footing; both were commodities; there was plenty of both. When men died of burns, when men were crushed in the mills, there were others to fill their places. When discontent drove men on, men were waiting for their jobs. Those were the days that built such towns as Rankin and Braddock, as Homestead and McKeesport. Those were the old days when the power of steel used men as it used the ore. In those days science dealt only with the ore and the processes of turning ore into iron and steel. The scientific spirit had not yet touched the men. Twenty years ago life was cheap in the steel towns.

Science showed the need of a stable supply of labor; it demonstrated how much new men cost; the shifting and ebbing of labor was found to be expensive; a discontented, disaffected labor supply did not produce. The heads of great industries began to perceive that there was something wrong. The steel masters led the way in welfare work.

The United States Steel Corporation has spent millions of dollars on welfare. It spent ten million dollars in 1917 and seventeen million in 1918. It provided schools and churches and clubs. In the Senate investigations of the steel strike Gary proudly gave the number of clothes lockers, water closet bowls, sanitary drinking fountains, swimming pools and restaurants provided for the men.

In 1918 the United States Steel Corporation spent a

million dollars on accident prevention. In six years the fatalities were cut down nearly fifty per cent by safety devices. The steel companies, formerly prodigal of human life, had become paternal.

The Autocracy of Steel had become benevolent and paternalistic. It rewarded loyal subjects—but it punished disloyal ones with banishment in times of peace, and in times of revolt it used armed force.

The Autocracy of Coal in West Virginia makes war openly on the workers. The Autocracy of Steel makes open war only in time of strike. It would rather be kind —if the workers would be good.

It was too late. Another day had dawned. It was too late to placate the workers with bands or even with pensions. There was something new in the air. Men had new thoughts and new desires. They were ready to express them in other ways than by an upheaving surge of inarticulate discontent. There was a great stirring among the people. Not even the safety devices could stop it. No amount of welfare work could prevent the workers in the steel mills from hearing the great voices talking throughout the earth.

The National Committee for Organizing Iron and Steel Workers

In 1918 the American Federation of Labor voted to organize the workers. The agreement between the workers and employers of the War Labor Board still existed. On one hand the workers had agreed not to strike; on the other the employers had agreed not to interfere with the organization of labor.

A sparse band of organizers began work in South Chicago in 1918. They organized South Chicago; they organized Joliet and the Calumet basin; they organized Gary where no organization had ever been. They worked in the East. At last all the workers in the steel mills moved and stirred together. In ten states and fifty towns thousands and thousands of men thought together; thousands and thousands of workers who would never know each other, who would never see one another, thought the same thoughts. The disturbance throughout all the steel towns was like a slow, heavy ground swell. There were very few organizers and a great number of steel workers. There was very little money for so great a campaign. And yet, steel was organized.

The mass of workers heaved and swayed—a long, slow upheaval. It was as though they advanced on a deep unhurried wave. It was like the heaving of mid-ocean.

How did they come to do this? The book that tells of the properties of the United States Steel Company is a very large book. It tells of holdings so great that

the ordinary mind cannot grasp its implied power. The men who own the steel mills and the mines and the railways that brought the steel ore down to the water-front and the boats that carried it across the lake, own other things in Alleghany County. They control the law courts. The mounted state police are at their call. The political power—with all burgesses and sheriffs—they own also. In the steel country government is possessed nakedly by those iron and steel masters and their friends.

The steel workers' revolt was a dumb revolt, a revolt as deep as has been the workers' patience. This mute rebellion of the steel workers had for its background the sullen, coiling smoke, the perpetual soot, the ugly streets; all these things, the long day, the long oppression, were the foundation of the steel strike and they were its background.

The men struck even against the paternalism of the steel masters who knew so little of what was in the workers' minds as to imagine that men who wanted freedom would be content with welfare work.

The memory of Homestead, the upheaval in Youngstown, the killing in Braddock, all were part of the strike. The flag of hope, the white curtains of the steel makers' wives were part of its fabric. The steel strike was not made of a simple pattern. The strike was about all these things, but it had a deeper portent.

The concern of these towns is not Life; it is Industry. The making of steel has become a monstrous preoccupation. Production a game where men's lives are used.

Life is about human beings. Human beings revolt when

their existence is used for the pleasure of kings or for making imperialistic wars or for the profits of industry.

That is why the organization was successful in spite of the power of the steel masters. Organizing went on underground, it went on through a fleet whispered word. Everywhere were spies; everywhere was repression. In spite of this 300,000 steel workers struck. There was something almost mystical in their unanimous action. Stickers appeared which said: "Strike September 22."

The Strike Demands

1. Right of collective bargaining.
2. Reinstatement of all men discharged for union activities with pay for time lost.
3. Eight hour day.
4. One day's rest in seven.
5. Abolition of 24-hour shift.
6. Increases in wages sufficient to guarantee American standard of living.
7. Standard scales of wages in all trades and classification of workers.
8. Double rates of pay for all overtime after 8 hours, holiday and Sunday work.
9. Check-off system of collecting union dues.
10. Principles of seniority to apply in the maintenance, reduction and increase of working forces.
11. Abolition of company unions.
12. Abolition of physical examination of applicants for employment.

The President's Conference

There was once a king who told the tides to cease mounting. The President called an industrial conference. This industrial conference met in Washington in early October. There were represented the employers, labor and the public. There were representatives of the farmers and vested interests. There were two women.

The representatives of the public were quaint companions. Whom did John D. Rockefeller represent and whom Judge Gary? For what public did Charles Edward Russel and Mr. Spargo, the two good Socialists, speak?

All these people had one quality which bound them together; they were all old. The only flower of youth was Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

All were old in thoughts, representatives of the old order. There was no spirit of hope in the air. Every one was asking, "What will come of this?" Every one, even the great employers, was vague and undirected.

Perhaps they knew that they were too late, and that their tardy argosy of conciliation could make no port in this storm. These representatives of the old order gathered together in Washington to patch an eleventh hour peace. One could hear outside the thundering noise of youth.

They sat in the big white hall in the Pan-American Building, in front of a lovely courtyard where great white parrots and blue mackaws sat on perches. Outside in the world the people Mr. Gompers represented were being killed by those whom Judge Gary was said to control.

The Laughter of Europe

Early in October another conference, having nothing to do with the American steel strike in particular, met in Washington. It was the first International Industrial Congress. Here employers and the representatives of labor met from all the countries of the world, except America, to discuss matters of interest to both sides. In Washington I met one of the Dutch employers.

"What a surprising country," he said, and he shook with laughter. "I am back in the Stone Age. Here I find you have not settled the question of collective bargaining. What a country!" He chuckled to himself. He could not understand it. "You have a steel strike because Mr. Gary will not talk to his workmen. I wonder the employers allow industry to be stopped."

But Mr. Gary of the United States Steel Corporation felt himself a champion of the right of individual bargaining, stemming the incoming flood of organized labor. He felt himself a crusader. He received letters of congratulation from chambers of commerce, from employers' and manufacturers' associations, from the heads of big business concerns.

But the Dutchman who represented the employers of Holland stood laughing in the October sunlight because it seemed to him amusing to find himself in a country where such questions were unsettled. He went off laughing, and his laughter was the judgment of Europe.

"What Meaneth a Tyrant"

I happened to stop in an old bookshop during the first days of the steel strike and there I found a book containing a quotation from Las Siete Partidas. It was written by Alphonso the Wise, a Spanish king of great learning, who lived in the thirteenth century. He explained "What meaneth a tyrant, and how he useth his power in a Kingdom where he hath obtained it." He said:

"A tyrant doth signify a cruel lord, who, by force or by craft, or by treachery, hath obtained power over any realm or country; and such men be of such nature, that when once they have grown strong in the land, they love rather to work their own profit, though it be to the harm of the land, than the common profit of all, for they always live in an ill fear of losing it. And that they may be able to fulfill this their purpose unencumbered, the wise of old have said that they use their power against the people in three manners. The first is, that they strive that those under their mastry be ever ignorant and timorous, because when they be such, they may not be bold to rise against them, nor to resist their wills; and the second is, that their victims be not kindly and united among themselves, in such wise that they trust not one another, for while they live in disagreement, they shall not dare to make any discourse against their lord, for fear faith and secrecy should not be kept among themselves; and the third way is, that they strive to make them poor, and to put them upon great undertakings, which they can never finish,

whereby they may have so much harm that it may never come into their hearts to devise anything against their ruler. And above all this, have tyrants ever striven to make spoil of the strong and to destroy the wise; and have forbidden fellowship and assemblies of men in their land, and striven always to know what men said or did; and do trust their counsel and the guard of their person rather to foreigners, who will serve at their will, than to them of the land, who serve from oppression."

PART TWO
THE STEEL STRIKE

CHAPTER VI

THE STRIKE AND THE STRIKE LEADERS

The Scope of the Strike

PEOPLE speak of the steel strike as if it were one thing. There was not one steel strike, but fifty. There were strikes in fifty different communities. Through ten states the steel workers struck. Throughout the principality of steel they quit work, not less than three hundred thousand of them. The strike swept through this country like a flame. It leaped from town to town and from state to state.

This is something new in the history of strikes, fifty towns agreeing like a single community; Pueblo acting in concert with Gary, Indiana; Birmingham, Alabama, keeping step with Rankin; Youngstown and Johnstown both shut down together as black as tar kettles.

Three hundred thousand people thinking the same thing. Twenty nationalities striking for the same reason. Over the wide expanse of this country one could see the most dramatic thing in the world—thousands on thousands of patient men doing nothing. Hundreds and thousands of patient men staying home.

These workers were slenderly organized. They were

separated by distance. They were divided by race and language, but for months they thought together, they starved together, they suffered terror, suspense, doubt, silence.

The method used for breaking the strike was to break the workers' system of communication with one another. To prevent their meeting together in a town. To keep one town from knowing what another town was doing. Though prevented from thinking together, yet the fifty towns and the three hundred thousand men thought simultaneously the same thing.

They were without strike discipline, they were without strike benefits; there were communities where no strike meetings were allowed to be held, some of the men never heard a speaker in their own language during all the strike.

It was as though some spiritual wave lifted up the heaving mass of the people and hurled it irresistibly forward.

Here in these towns two ideas of society met and clashed. That of the steel masters was definite. It was formulated in the eighteenth century. A generation ago, by destroying the workers' organization, the great steel masters restated this theory. It was that they had the right to run their business as they chose. They believed this absolutely. It was not hypocrisy on their part when they called this "a matter of principle." Frick believed this and Carnegie and the lesser Gary.

It is the custom of the United States Steel Corporation to crush out all rebellion among its workers. In this the

lesser iron masters follow the great ones. I have seen two such rebellions crushed by the Steel Corporations. One was of the miners in the Mesaba Range in 1916 and the other was that of the steel workers in 1919.

The steel masters would stop all industry, the workers of the country could starve before the steel masters would discuss matters of common interest with the steel workers' representatives. The steel masters, whatever else they are, have sincerity. I said this to one of the steel workers. He answered:

"Sincerity like Hell! Sincere like the Croton-bug's love for meat."

The strike of the steel workers was part of the struggle for freedom. Down the ages people have striven to think for themselves. They have striven to govern themselves. Sparticus and the early Christians were part of the struggle going on to-day. Through bloody conflict men gained such rights to think as they now have. They have paid for their incomplete victories by torture, exile and blood. A common impulse toward freedom gave the people their steadfastness and a desperate and enduring patience.

This upwelling of the workers was contrary to the idea of the iron masters, for the business of autocracy is the maintenance and increase of its power.

The steel workers' strike threatened this autocratic industrial government. Autocracy had its age-old answer to any attempt to limit its authority—repression with violence.

John Fitzpatrick and William Z. Foster

Samuel Gompers was first chairman of the National Committee. He resigned in favor of John Fitzpatrick, President of the Chicago Federation of Labor and most beloved by the rank and file of all labor leaders. He conducted the Chicago end of the strike but the responsibility of the Steel Strike rested on William Z. Foster. He presented the resolution for organizing the iron and steel workers to the Chicago Federation of Labor in 1918. He was then engaged in organizing the packing industry. Largely through Foster's ability this industry whose organization had been totally destroyed in 1907, was reorganized. They won their demands without striking.

Foster imagined organizing steel under wartime conditions, without striking steel. Through lack of money and loss of time his first plan was not realized. He worked with what materials he had. It had been said steel could never be organized. Foster and the men working with him organized steel.

Foster is a long New Englander from Taunton, Mass. He has a thin face, a kind mouth and eyes, and he can work from morning to night, interrupt his work to receive a hundred people, and never turn a hair. He is composed, confident, unemphatic and imperishably unruffled. The waves of the strike break around him, there come to him the incessant news of arrests, there come to him daily multitudinous problems for decisions. All the minutiæ of this strike flung over the surface of the whole country,

involving the destinies of the men of a whole great industry come to him. Never for a moment does Foster hasten his tempo.

One of the reasons of this is that he seems completely without ego. Foster never thinks of Foster. He lives completely outside the circle of self. Absorbed ceaselessly in the ceaseless stream of detail which confronts him. A ceaseless stream whose sum spells the fate of 500,000 men, and all those dependent upon them.

I have never heard him express himself in any abstraction. But the sum of my impression of him is this. It is as though he said:

"All I can do is my best. This is not a fight of to-day nor of to-morrow, it is part of the fight that was going on at the time of the Cæsars. This great steel strike is only an incident."

Once in a while he gets angry over the stupidity of man; then you see his quiet is the quiet of a high tension machine moving so swiftly it barely hums.

He is swallowed up in the strike's immensity. What happens to Foster does not concern him. I do not believe that he spends five minutes in the whole year thinking of Foster or Foster's affairs.

Some Organizers

Organizing the steel workers was warfare. It needed courage to organize steel in the Pittsburgh district. Every force of society was against these organizers. The A. F.

of L. was treated in the steel towns and in the Allegheny, Mahoning and Monongahela valleys as though it were a predatory outlaw band.

The local secretaries were men in their forties most of them, men getting gray, old trade unionists.

These men were threatened with mob violence, they were attacked by the press, they were accused of graft, they were arrested, released, re-arrested. Some startled men were arrested on the charge of criminal syndicalism.

Suddenly they found themselves outside the pale of organized society. It was a strange thing for most of them to find themselves opposing society, to have their meetings broken up by the State Constabulary, to be unable to get a hall in the town, to be constantly subject to arrest and to the abuse of the press. They had always had to fight employers; now government was against them.

There was never a more devoted group of men than those who worked by Foster's side in the campaign of organizing the steel workers. Only men of courage and determination could survive. The brunt of the fight around Pittsburg was borne by J. G. Brown, a shingle weaver from the Northwest, a tall man with quiet ways. They pried open town after town. In one steel town after another meetings were held where there had been no organization allowed by the steel masters in twenty years. In one steel town after another the local secretaries established themselves in the face of violence and abuse.

CHAPTER VII

VIOLENCE

Police Violence

FOSTER and the local organizer had to face abuse before the strike. Everything the steel companies could do was done to discredit Foster. Everything the police and bosses could do to discourage the organization of the workers, was done.

When the men struck violence by the police increased. The Constabulary had already been active. Now the state troopers appeared in all the steel towns. They broke up meetings. They rode their horses into the workers' very houses. In Braddock no assemblies of people were permitted. They rode down men coming from mass. Steel workers could not assemble. They chased the children of Father Kazinci's parish school.

"It *is* terror, you know," one of the organizers said to me, "when you're on foot and they ride down upon you and you see their three-foot riot clubs raised above your head."

The idea seemed to be to terrorize the workers. There were besides deputized gunmen. Workers were arrested by the hundreds, held, and no charges preferred against them. Then they were fined.

Constabulary in Braddock

In Braddock no one could tell why the State Constabulary were there. The Burgess didn't know, nor the President of the Council, nor the Councilmen. The Edgar Thompson Mills had never shut down completely. There was never any trouble in Braddock. On Braddock's front street there was no sign of a strike. Life went on as usual. But one day, unasked, the Constabulary rode into Braddock on their beautiful horses, and there they stayed.

During the first days of the strike they patrolled the streets where the workers lived. I saw two of them riding down a mean street. They rode abreast and had their clubs in their hands, looking very splendid and martial. The word went through the courts and alleys, "The Cossacks are here!" All the little boys ran out to stare at them. Women came out of houses and stood on doorsteps, their babies in their arms; striking steel workers came out from courtyards. It was as good as a circus parade. The Cossacks walked their horses to the end of the street; then they turned and smartly trotted their horses back. They drove the people from the street. They drove the women and children back from their stoops into the houses.

Both troopers were young fellows; one was boyish and blonde and the older one was dark with a sullen look to him. One tossed a joke to the other as they came. They looked as if they were having a good time seeing the people scurry into the houses like frightened rabbits.

At a corner opposite me a man stood staring at them. He looked like a Pole, with high cheek-bones and bright blue eyes, his blonde mustache curled up sharply. The Constabulary came trotting down on him.

A woman near me took hold of my arm and said:

"Come inside, missus; you'll get hurt."

The troopers had an argument with the man. The man said:

"I'm standing on my own stoop."

"Get into the house, you ———," said one who raised his club and made as though to ride up the stoop. The man very slowly went into his house. They rode on leaving an empty street behind them.

Brutality of Power

When I went into the Strike Headquarters in Pittsburg a stout man, tipped back in a chair, was telling a story of what had happened in Clairton before the strike.

"We couldn't hold a meeting in Clairton; we couldn't get a permit. We hired an empty lot from a striker and held a meeting there. The Cossacks broke it up. They tore down an American flag. They trampled it under their horses' hoofs. That started trouble with the ex-service boys. Seven was arrested and fined."

"But," said the organizer, "even if he was drunk what made him tear down the flag?"

We used to talk about the psychology of the Constabulary. We could never understand the things they did. There seemed to be no answer to them. It tasted of unreason. Why should they tear down an American flag? Why should they chase babies going to school? The breaking up of meetings—that was easy. It was the detail we could not fathom.

What has happened to a man when his instinctive gesture is to strike a frightened woman in the face, like the Slovak woman in Braddock to whose house I went one day?

As I came in to the Braddock office some one was wondering:

"But why should he slap her face?"

The organizer explained to me: "The Cossacks were searching a Slovak lady's house."

I went to see the woman. In her house piles of clothes

newly dried lay in disorder on the lounge. The dishes had not been washed. The work was not getting on. In the midst of this sat a bulky young woman. It was getting hard for her to do her work. Her time was near—she moved with effort.

She spoke little English and told her story in her own language. The girl with me translated.

"She says her husband and the boarder was asleep upstairs. The Cossacks came in. She screamed. The Cossacks said, 'Shut your mouth.' She screamed again."

"Then he do this," the woman interrupted. She made a gesture of striking, negligent, powerful, contemptuous.

"He hit her across the face with his glove," the girl explained.

I asked, "Why did they search the house?"

"My husband, he a striker," she explained. She turned to the girl and spoke in Slovak. The girl translated:

"She says they broke her trunks up."

"Why?" I asked.

The woman shook her head. She could not tell. The Cossacks had come splendid and contemptuous and hit her in the face, had strewn things around, and broke her trunks.

The stories of beatings and arrests came in an endless flood. There was no end to them. Within two days one was drenched with them. In three days one was saturated. They made no more impression. They became part of life.

Foster's Office

Through Foster's office flowed a constant stream of people with stories of violence. The telephone buzzed news of arrests, of beatings. Women with shawls over their heads came in for news of missing husbands.

"The head office of the National Committee for Organizing Iron and Steel Workers" implies size, power, and extended organization. It sounds imposing. All that is imposing about it is the name. This head office was one small room. In it were Foster and Foster's stenographer. There was, besides, Edwin Newdick, the publicity director. Part of the time there was an extra stenographer. As far as the steel strike was concerned, they had no such thing as publicity in the modern sense of the term. The United States Steel Corporation did all the publicity.

A glance at Foster's office showed many posters on the walls; the poster "Americans All"—our foreign nationalities fighting together under our flag. Next to this an announcement of Mother Jones' meeting; another one announcing a meeting at which Foster would speak. One or two cartoons, a blackboard, two tables and a desk, and a picture of the patient face of murdered Fanny Sellins.

It is the quietest office I have ever been in. No one ever gets excited. Every one works ceaselessly and without flurry. All day long people came to see Foster. Foster talked with any one who wanted to talk with him. He was as accessible as the Post-Office Building opposite.

Fanny Sellins

Fanny Sellins was a woman organizer who was murdered by gunmen. The picture of her bruised face is hung in every organizer's office. It is a little picture on a post-card. In Foster's office it was tacked up on a bulletin board as though at random. From its inconspicuous place it dominated the office. Whoever came in turned to look at it. It made no difference how often one came in, one's eyes, in spite of oneself, traveled to the post-card on the wall.

When the strike was still young I came in one day. A little old woman stood before it. Her hair had the pure white of extreme age. She wore a basque with lace on it, and a bonnet that had a touch of purple. A very neat little old woman, who looked like everybody's grandmother. She was standing before the picture and talking as though to herself.

"I often wonder it wasn't me they got. Whenever I look at the picture of her I wonder it's not me lying on the ground. They shot her from behind when she bent over children to protect them. They knew what they were doing. They went out to get Fanny Sellins. Bending over them children with her back turned, they shot her."

Every one stopped to listen to this old woman. She sighed and turned toward us.

"Oh, well, I must now be going. Is any one to carry my bag?"

There was a group of young men in the office. They

had come in from some of the surrounding steel towns. There were always people in Foster's office. They all came forward.

"We'll all go with you, Mother," they said.

She went out, the foreign boys walking shelteringly about her. Mother Jones and Fanny Sellins are the only two American women that foreign steel workers know about.

Third Degree

One night I sat late in Foster's quiet office, talking with Mrs. Foster. Sylvia Manley, Foster's daughter, was there working. The men had gone. The door opened as though blown by a wind, and Mestovic, the organizer from Clairton, came in shoving before him two Slovak boys. Mestovic was a black flame flickering in the wind of anger. The intense and passionate allegiance which some men give to their country, he gives to the Union. By his own effort he brought in 1,200 men. He has been arrested, fined, threatened. Each threat and each arrest was like oil thrown on a blazing fire. He is a Croatian and his lean dark face looks as though he had Gypsy blood. He was quiet in the excitement of his anger.

"Show your wrists," he said. The two boys stolidly put out their wrists. They were bruised and chafed; one bled.

"You should see them when they got loose four or five hours ago."

We asked what had happened.

"Handcuffed all day to beds in hotel room." He told

the story with quiet violence. The boys threw in an unemotional detail like, "Then the Cossack hit me and called me 'you damned Bolshevist.'"

"A scab lived in his house and the landlady throw him out. Some one break his trunk. He go for constabulary. Six or seven constabulary come and get boys. They take them to hotel where they stay. They put them in separate rooms. They don't arrest them. They don't take them to jail. They twist their arms, they handcuff them, they fasten this boy to iron rail of bed so he bend over. He stay there from nine to half-past four."

"I cry and cry," said the boy. "My wrists swell up. I ask they give me a drink. I ask they loose up handcuff. Them only make handcuff tighter. I don't know what I do. They say 'you damn Bolshevik! Your friend confess; better for you you confess too.' I know he don't confess. How can he?"

"This boy, they beat him," said Mestovic, pointing to the other. "They beat him so his nose bleed. They give him cloth so blood don't get on carpet, but it get on carpet all the same."

The Striker Who Came to Be Reassured

In the third week of the strike I saw a young fellow standing in Foster's office, as though waiting for some one. Every one was busy. People came and went. For a long time no one spoke to him. He waited in good-tempered patience. At last some one asked him what he wanted. He wanted advice. He had ninety cents left. He wanted to know what to do. He did not want strike benefits. He wanted moral support and encouragement. He wanted to know how he was going to get along. He was a foreigner and a young married man. Beside his ninety cents he had some chickens. He had good neighbors who would give him vegetables from their garden. He told his story deprecatingly, smiling in an embarrassed fashion over his difficulties. The people in the office talked it up with him. He knew there would be no strike benefits. He had the contact he wanted and he went away, still with his smile, his assets, his ninety cents, his good neighbors, and his will to stick it out, and there were thousands like him in the strike.

CHAPTER VIII

STRIKE MEETINGS

Pittsburg Meetings

IN Pittsburg no one but the steel workers knew there was a strike, for picketing was not allowed. When the strike occurred Sheriff Haddock deputized five thousand men. He said that there were only five thousand people striking in the Pittsburg district. He deputized one man for every striker.

The strikers stayed home in Pittsburg. Some went out to find other jobs. Some met together in pool rooms. You could find them in their houses. You could see them nights at the Labor Temple. At the Labor Temple strike meetings were permitted. Strike meetings were not allowed elsewhere in the City of Pittsburg. There was not at any time a hint of riot; there was not at any time a hint of trouble. But no meetings were allowed.

The Labor Temple sits on a hill far off from the steel mills. It meant a ten cent fare to come to a meeting, or a walk of miles. Distances are far in Pittsburg.

Once when the American Federation of Labor tried to hold a meeting in a hall nearer the strikers' homes, the streets around the hall were dark with people. People

were huddled on the corners; people formed a square on streets leading to the hall. A light cordon of police had been thrown about the hall. In front of the hall stood four policemen. A patrol wagon was standing near. We came in a jitney and were allowed to pass. Inside there was no one. Downstairs in the vacated bar-room with its clinging smell of stale beer stood the German owner of the hall. He was apologetic. Three policemen blustered up, a good-looking sergeant and two others.

"You can't meet here," they said. "No meetings," they repeated.

The Socialist Party met in this hall without permits. Foreign language groups met without permits. Striking steel workers could not meet. The American Federation of Labor was outlawed.

The organizers and a lawyer wrangled with the police. Both sides grew hot. Outside in the darkness the steel workers waited. There was a feeling of tenseness in the air. A very little would have made trouble. Outside the police were handling the crowd pleasantly, urging them to walk on. The crowd flowed along like sluggish water. Men muttered their dissatisfaction in their own tongues and sullenly obeyed.

Father Kazinci's Church

One Sunday I stood in Homestead trying to get a car for Braddock. The cars were filled; men hung from them like swarms of bees. Homestead was moving to Braddock. There was an exodus. Those who could not get on cars, walked. I got a place at last. There were also women in the crowd. I wondered why the working population of Homestead went to Braddock. All the cars that came into Braddock were crowded. Those from Bessemer and those from McKeesport, and cars coming from Rankin, all were black with crowding men.

It was a good-natured crowd; it had a holiday air. Men joked one another. Men called out to friends. It seemed like a time of festival. I got off at Main Street, following the crowd. They all converged at St. Michael's Church. Far down the street men were standing. The church was packed. Then I saw every one was going to Father Kazinci's church. There were no labor meetings allowed in McKeesport, no meetings in Rankin; Homestead had one meeting a week. But the steel workers could come to hear Father Kazinci preach.

They made way for me. I managed to squeeze in. In that church there was an air of happiness. They had escaped from the Constabulary. The Constabulary could not follow them to church. There were old women with faces wrinkled like dried figs, wide-bosomed mothers, their faces still brown from the sun. There were children. Men knelt in the aisles; the aisles were black with men. The

church was more crowded than the organizer's office. Their restlessness and anxiety were gone. They stood quiet, released, free for a moment. Then full-throated this audience sang a chant of the sixth century—men and women and children. The Slovaks have never lost the custom of communal singing.

Then Father Kazinci preached. He spoke in Slovak. I could not understand. Later I asked him what he had preached. He said, "I preach to them about their own weapons. Against them are violence, lies, repression. They have only their patience, their faith, their endurance —and then I told them the story of Pharaoh. He would not let the Children of Israel out of bondage."

Meeting in Homestead

After twenty years labor meetings were permitted in Homestead for the first time. I went to one such meeting. It was held in a small hall. The room was packed with the same quiet men I had often seen in the National Committee Offices.

On the platform sat six troopers. They were in their uniforms of dark gray. They carried their clubs and their revolvers were strapped to their sides. It seemed more like a police court than a labor meeting. The audience was foreign. Only a few spoke English as their native language. But the speaking was all in English. Foreign language speakers were not permitted.

It was not because there had been disorder in Homestead that the Constabulary was there. There had never been disorder. The Constabulary was there to censor the meeting. The organizer spoke only in generalizations. He spoke in platitudes. The men listened with grave attention, but their eyes were fixed on the state troopers. They eyed them with dislike and anger. They kept steady eyes upon them.

These meetings were allowed once a week as a concession to free speech, after they had arrested Mother Jones and thousands of workers had milled around the jail demanding her release. The authorities came to her in her cell and asked if she could send the workers home. She came out and spoke to them. She got them in a good humor. She sent them home. Now they may have meet-

ings in Homestead—with the state Constabulary on the platform.

They were sterile meetings; there might as well have been none. But this fight of the rank and file was not fed by oratory; it was not made by excitement. There was behind it a terrible patience. The men sat there rigid, listening to unimportant things said in a language they did not understand. Whenever there was a meeting they came and faced the State Constabulary, who looked down insolently upon them.

Marching Men

A wide country, brown farms, comfortable frame houses shaded by trees, round white clouds rolling over a blue sky, a keen wind blowing dust; a white road filled with men, a road as crowded as Broadway at noon; men and boys walking in groups, men by twos talking together, men walking alone plugging along with their heads down, walking fast as though late to an appointment. Here and there like bright punctuation marks, women. A few young girls walking swiftly, most of the women accompanying husbands. Brave looking women, placid, wide hipped; three thousand men and women pouring over a road.

These are steel workers from Sharon and Farrell leaving Pennsylvania to go to a meeting in Ohio. The men have on white collars; they are freshly shaved; they are neatly dressed in their best clothes. They look as if they were going to Mass. There is a cheerful air of holiday

among them. Some of the younger fellows sing; a few of them joke each other; most of them swing along silent, striking out toward Ohio.

In Farrell no meetings can be held. Steel workers in Farrell and Sharon are not allowed to discuss their business. They have to walk many miles to go to a meeting. Every week they file out, hundreds of them, to learn how their strike is going. During the week they must sit silent and quiet in their homes. They must sit quiet in their homes and watch the scabs going to work. They have nothing to keep them from doubt, so they step out hopefully to get away from the silence. They stand all the afternoon under the sky, listening to speakers.

They have to bring home faith enough to last them a week. Back in Farrell there is silence, doubt, isolation and the threatening smoke of the mills.

As we went across the state line into Ohio I walked with four boys. They were American born. They were all counted as Hunkies. As we went across the line one said:

"Here we are back in America."

Meeting in Youngstown

In the Youngstown Office there was a blackboard. A list of towns was written on it. Opposite the name of each town was a speaker's name. There were a great many meetings in the Youngstown district. There were few organizers. Every organizer had to speak at two or three meetings every night. Youngstown organizers had no time for play. They moved incessantly from one strike meeting to another.

I went with an organizer to East Youngstown. The hall was up a steep hill. The street was dark and rutted by rain. Coming up the stairs the noise of the meeting came to us in a roar; the heat of the hall rushed out at us like the blast of a furnace. Men were talking at the top of their voices. Men were arguing together; men were laughing. The men were happy and excited. Their eyes flashed. They were rested and gay; they were ready for anything. The strike was young.

They have not forgotten that four years before they had swirled out from the shops and mills in a mighty flood. Then they had been leaderless; their rebellion was unformulated. Now they were directed; they knew what they wanted. They felt they would get it. Packed in this hall they felt their united strength. It was a young, gay strength. It had an irresistible quality. The organizer said to me: "If they could keep this spirit they could win any strike." They had an easy confidence in themselves. For three weeks no smoke had stained Youngstown's chim-

neys. For three weeks the saffron glare had gone from the sky. The sky had been undisturbed by the sudden fury of the blast furnace.

A foreign speaker began; the laughter stopped. The men raised earnest faces to him. From the platform you could look down into them. The steel workers are wide shouldered, strong looking men. Most of these men were of Slavic origin: Poles, Slovaks, Croatians. There were also a few Italians, some Rumanians, a few Negroes. I could not understand the speaker; I could understand the silent men. This room was packed with quiet rebellion. There were fifteen more halls that night in the Youngstown district filled with workers. Every race had its meeting. Rooms packed with revolt; halls filled with men determined to win, men greatly tired of conditions under which they had been living.

This Youngstown crowd was an excited crowd; the tingling quality of it caught me up. In another moment they would have gone cheering down the street, and I would have gone after them had they gone.

Their mood changed. It was as though clouds had darkened the sky. Their faces became hard. The faces of the crowd mirrored their anger as the sea mirrors an approaching storm. I heard the name of Fanny Sellins. The organizer was speaking earnestly, without gesture, bent over slightly from the hips, talking down into the faces of the crowd. "Fanny Sellins" and again "Fanny Sellins" I heard him repeat, while the face of the crowd darkened and grew still with silent menace.

CHAPTER IX

SENATORS AND STEEL WORKERS

Senate Investigation

WHEN the workers in important industries strike it is customary to hold a Senate investigation.

During the first ten days of the strike fourteen people had been killed. All of them were strikers. Fanny Sellins had been murdered. The number of wounded was not known. People nursed their wounds in silence. Gary was under martial law. There were no civil liberties in Pennsylvania. A million dollars a day was the loss in wages to the steel workers. The loss to the steel companies was not calculated. The industries dependent on steel were slowed down.

Mr. Gary's eighteenth century principles, which give a man control over his own business, were at stake.

The Senators inquired into these facts. The investigation took place in a courtroom in the Post Office Building in Pittsburg. In the center of the room is a square enclosure. Here sat the middle-aged-to-elderly gentlemen, the Senators. One came from the South, one from New England, one from the Southwest, and one from the Middlewest. The lawyer for the steel corporation and the

lawyer for the workers sat within the enclosure. A small group of steel operators sat with them.

The investigation was only interesting to the steel workers. They had come in numbers. They stood quietly, filling one side of the court house allotted to them, while the "general public" sat in a sparse row at the far end of the hall.

Before the Senators flowed a ceaseless stream of people. These were all dressed in their best clothes. The men were shaved. They came before the Government in their best. Few spoke English well. Many of the women testified through interpreters.

They told before the Senate the stories of violence which one could not escape in Foster's office or in the offices of the local secretaries. They told without emotion the stories of beatings and arrests. They seemed resigned. They did not seem surprised or indignant. For days one found before the Senate decent respectable folk telling fantastic stories of abuse. Their defenselessness and respectability were what one remembered of them.

Bullied Workers

A Slovak woman from Dinora, with dark hair and pink cheeks, testified. This is my memory of what she said:

"My husband and my children were in bed. I go to the store before they get up. I must go to the store early and get what they need. I go on street walking to the store. Some one behind me call 'Scab!'"

She was caught in the picket line between the picketers and the scabs. A negro took hold of her arm. He pointed a gun at her and arrested her.

"He called me bad names, too," she said. She was taken to jail and told to pay a fine. She said she would not pay—she was not guilty; but because she had a six-months-old baby she finally paid. But they kept her in jail all day and into the night while her husband looked for her. She testified there were colored strike-breakers and that negroes were deputized. While she was in jail, terribly beaten men were brought in.

"My wife and children were sick," said a man from Monessen who worked in the wire mill. "I was going for the doctor. Some one said, 'Don't go down there. The State Constable is there taking people to jail.' I had to go back—they got clubs."

The State Constable with a horse rode him down. He was arrested and held for $500 bail. He pleaded with them to send the doctor to his wife and children. He worked eleven hours a day and thirteen at night. He worked through a long shift Sundays, and was striking for better conditions and for eight hours. He had taken out his first papers, but had never had time to become a citizen.

He was young and full of high vitality, and he told his story of his arrest with an air of naïve surprise as though he were asking himself, "What the devil did the State Constable pounce on me for when I was just going to the doctor? And they searched me too—that's queerer yet."

A Croat, who makes wire in Monessen, was an angry

witness. They had arrested him, found him unarmed, and told him: "If you don't go to work you must go to jail."

He was a strongly built young man and his fury streamed out in his answer. He was not polite to the Senators. The representatives of the higher government of the United States did not impress him as it did the other steel workers. To most steel workers the government is an august thing which they respect. He had been in America thirteen years. They asked him why he was not a citizen and he flung at them with passion:

" 'Cause I don't get time!"

Later he told them, still rudely, and with anger:

"I'd like to learn. If I'm going to work eight hours I'm going to learn. I like this country. I like America. If I take a day off I have no money to pay board. Sure, I like to learn about the government of this country."

But his manner said, "You fools! How do you expect me to learn when I work half the time night and twelve hours?"

As a final proof of his fatigue he flung at them that he hadn't been to a movie for over a year.

Not every one was bewildered and not every one was resigned. Now and then a conscious young fellow would tell you all you wanted to know about the strike, like a young man who said he worked in the Mayo Mill at 17½ cents an hour in 1914. He was in the Sixth Engineers during the war. He came back March, 1919, and was demobilized in April.

"I had a mother to support. They offered me a shovel-

ing wheelbarrow job. I turned it down. I got a job in the steel works on September 3rd. Clothes cost six or seven dollars a week. You can't keep on wearing your clothes. They get soaked with oil. Your shoes don't last. The heat burns the soles off your shoes."

"Did many men strike in your mill?"

"They all struck." His answer was like a sharp salute.

"Why did you strike?"

"I thought it was my duty because I couldn't get any satisfaction from the Company. They patted me on the shoulder and said, 'We will give you a good job.' They urged the men to come to work and then the Company gives them guns. We were told the Superintendent carried in whiskey to the scabs."

"What are you striking for?" they asked him.

"Eight hours, more pay, better conditions and more safety devices," he rapped out on them, barking it like a command on parade.

Outside Arrests

There were called as witnesses some odd men who were not strikers. Such as the man from the grocery store in Homestead, with a greenish pale face and a long plaster on his head. He had been an American citizen for three years. He was standing in the doorway of his store when a State policeman came in and knocked him down and beat him. He never knew what he was charged for, but was held in $300 bail and fined $6.35. He gave his testimony in a

low tone, unassertive, almost apologetic. He seemed to be questioning the Senators and the crowd at large as to why this strange fate should have overtaken him.

The hotel keeper from Homestead has been an American citizen for ten years. He was a puffy, inoffensive man, not accustomed to asserting himself. He, too, seemed puzzled like the man of the grocery store. He had come from Germany and had his hotel for six years. He was beaten up and arrested. They chased him into the hotel and tried to ride the horses in after him. He was asked whether they often rode their horses into the houses.

"They rode their horses into the women's houses," he answered.

Later some one explained the case of the hotel man and the grocer to me. "Most likely they gave the strikers credit or let them come to their places. Any one sympathetic to the strikers is liable to get beat up."

It was the matter-of-factness of this that is its most fantastic element. Every one had accepted the troopers; every one had accepted the fact that strikers get beaten. The Constabulary and beatings had become part of the strikers' lives in Allegheny County.

Docile Steel Workers

There are plenty of satisfied workers, plenty of people who have nothing against the United States Steel Corporation.

There was one gentle old fellow who testified a long time. He spent thirty-three years of his life working in the mills. An old man, gray of face, gray of hair. He seemed very tired. He seemed dim and bewildered. He works twelve hours a day and doesn't think it is too much. He has worked twelve hours for thirty-three years. He got 17 cents an hour when he started and now gets 33 cents. He has nine children, five boys and four girls. All but one are married. Life has given him all he desires. He owns his home. He thinks he is glad to work twelve hours a day. He is the perfect product of the system of the Steel Company. There would be no disturbance in the steel mills if all were like him. He is an Englishman, and he doesn't know what they want to go out making trouble for. He accepts twelve hours of work like a law of nature.

Another witness like him was a man, thirteen years in this country, now making $4.32 a day. He had no complaint against the Steel Corporation. He shoveled coal ten hours a day.

"What was the strike about?"

He shook his head. He did not know.

Would he like to learn English? Yes, but he was too old.

"If I go to school now some one laugh at me," he said

deprecatingly. He intends to go on all his life shoveling coal for ten hours a day. He thinks he is content.

There were many witnesses like this, slow old men, long in the service of U. S. Steel, old men without complaint. They did not know what the strike was about. They did not want to know. Dim, patient people, uncomplaining, men whose desires did not transcend a steady job.

Americanizers

After a few weeks of deliberation, the Senators turned in the report of their investigation. They recommended a shorter work-day; they admitted the Constabulary had overstepped the bounds in some cases. Americanization of the workers, they felt was what they needed.

I was discussing this question of Americanization with a striker standing on the street corner of Braddock. The smoke rolled up in a mountain of gray and white before us. A flicker of sulphur colored flame blossomed for a moment at the summit of one of the mill chimneys. The street was empty but for an old woman with her hair tied up in a black kerchief, dragging some wood along, and another carrying groceries.

"Being a citizen," he said, "that means first of all loving your country, don't it? You have got to love it to begin with."

Two state troopers turned in at the far end of the street and paced slowly up.

"That's hard to do," he said, "when you live in the town with them fellows."

CHAPTER X

OUTSIDE PEOPLE

Comfortable People

PITTSBURG sprawls into far suburbs where the comfortable people live. It was not by chance that few of these came to the Senate Investigation. They were not greatly interested in the steel strike. There must have been some who wondered why three hundred thousand people walked out, and some of the well-to-do women may have felt concerned. I did not meet any; but I heard that indignant women met in the women's clubs to condemn the strikers. There were many people who were angry at the workers for striking. They called the workers Bolsheviks. There were others who thought that the workers were only misled. These called the leaders Bolsheviks.

A long shadow was cast by Lenin, and it fell cold across the steel masters. It was convenient to think that the steel strike was an echo of Soviet Russia.

There were a great many people who had a great desire to prove that Russian money was behind the steel strike and that "German gold" was behind Russia, that one could hate the workers' inconvenient revolt openly and completely.

No one seemed disturbed that the workers' liberties were taken from them. A Roman Catholic Priest and a Lutheran clergyman lifted up their voices. That was all.

The comfortable people whom I met talked about production. The country needed it; now the workers were stopping it, they said, because of outside agitators. The material from which this strike was made lay before them in plain view. It was easy to learn. One might see it displayed in every meeting of the men; one could find out about it by going through the towns. After a while I had the impression that the world in which the steel workers lived was invisible to most of the comfortable people. One of the comfortable people said to me:

"The slums of the steel towns are awful. You don't have to look for them; the street cars run right through them.

"The steel companies have made an incredible amount of money. To see how money is squandered is disgusting. Every little girl thinks she must have her electric car and a thousand dollar fur coat.

"But I think Judge Gary is right. I admire his stand. Every man has a right to run his business as he pleases."

The Convention

A convention of the Pennsylvania State Federation of Labor came together to demand that the Governor restore the civil liberties to the people. In the Labor Temple you could find out at that time what labor in Pennsylvania looked like. These were not business agents; these were

the workers, miners and carpenters, plumbers and men from the building trades; men doing every kind of labor that is performed in the state. They filled the hall; they filled the gallery. No state convention was ever so large.

The orators who had come to enthuse them remained to quiet them. James Maurer had to use a strong hand to hold them. Their resistance clothed itself in words and acts. This convention was something new. This was the first time that a unit of the American Federation of Labor had come together for political ends. They had come with a threat of using their combined power to protect the liberties of the workers.

"We want to know," they said, "if the Constitution of the United States exists for the privileged classes only, or if it applies to us too."

The first resolution was that steel, coal, and the railways should not settle their difficulties independently. This was a demand for a closer unity, a foreshadowing of a power to come when the wish in this resolution should be expressed in mighty action. In the convention you could see labor feeling its way to a new power.

One man spoke against this resolution. His name was Feeley. He was voted from the floor. At his words pandemonium broke loose. It was hard for Maurer to quiet the men. They called Feeley "stool pigeon." They wanted him recalled. The sense of that meeting was that coal, steel, and iron belonged together, and that they should use their power together. Feeley's opposition brought the

convention to a climax. While they met they did not lose their tension.

The steel strike had left the mills; it had left the river bottoms. Because the workers had been ridden down by the Constabulary, because they had been unjustly arrested in numbers, because the employers had pledged themselves to break organized labor, because the Attorney General had commended mob action in the steel towns—labor in the entire state of Pennsylvania rediscovered the maxim that an injury to one is the concern of all. Because of the injury done to the striking steel workers, labor asserted itself. The workers of Pennsylvania voted the recommendation of a general strike if the liberties of the people were not returned to them.

The workers put a dream into a resolution at this convention. It was the dream of the solidarity of labor.

Quiet Towns

The steel towns had no news of what was going on in the Convention Hall. The papers in the steel towns did not speak of the convention. The mass of steel workers did not know that labor was having a convention for them. There were many towns where they learned it only through a meager strike bulletin. There were many strikers who knew nothing about it. The steel towns in Alleghany County were muffled in silence. The workers could never tell how the strike was going in those towns. The news came from the other side. The papers told the workers that the strike was over. The bosses told them the strike was over. Tradesmen told them to go back to work. Silence followed the violence of the Constabulary. Inaction and silence wrapped the strike around.

In Monessen and Donora, in Rankin, Homestead, and Braddock, the mills always made smoke. Some men in Allegheny County always went to work. The strike went on underground. There was no drifting population on the street. In their homes and in their meetings there was an ominous quiet. The quiet was the quiet of terror.

Terror and suspicion hung over these towns like a thick cloud. But the strike went on, as though like a living thing it had a life of its own. It did not live in meetings, it could not live in the congregations of men, it had no expression, but underneath the silent terror flowed the current of the strike. After a time this seemed the normal way of living. After a time I forgot that there were places where workers were allowed to discuss their affairs.

PART THREE

SILENCE

CHAPTER XI

DARK TOWNS

Mother Jones

MOTHER JONES wove in and out of the steel strike. She was never long away. During her absence from Pittsburg one could hear of her being in Joliet or in the Calumet Basin. She had greater intimacy with the workers than any one else in America.

She is their "Mother."

The foreign workers rarely meet Americans. The only Americans that some meet are bosses, landlords or tradesmen.

Mother Jones is the only American woman that thousands of them have ever spoken to. She goes about surrounded with the protecting love of young men whose names she does not know. She goes up and down the country, and with her walks the memory of the long fight of the working people of America. It is a matter of record that her home is wherever there is a fight for justice. No minor prophet ever foretold the downfall of an arrogant city in bitterer words than she foretells the downfall of what she calls "the ruling powers."

When the convention ended I went with Mother Jones

to Ohio. She sat beside me in the train talking; she talked almost as to herself. You might fancy that you heard the heart of the workers muttering.

"There was never a convention like this before. They never met before to talk only about liberty. Oh, it's coming; it's coming! . . . There's a terrible bitter tide rolling up and welling up in this country. There's gall mixed with the mud that's churned under the workers' feet in the city alleys. . . .

"Look at these towns; look out of the window. Nothing to rest the eyes. I say to you there has never been a crueler despotism than there is in this country to-day. Look out there! Look at the stacks of the mills like trees in a black forest! Look at the blast furnaces and smoke as far as your eye can reach, and the wealth that comes out of it made by the blood of slaves."

She cannot endure the suffering of the workers' children. She cannot endure the indifference of rich women. The two in her mind are sharply related. The indifferent women are blood-stained creatures to her. Brutal, cruel, abandoned, she makes you feel this. Exaggerations in her mouth become real. She talks about "Brutal women hung about with the decorations they have bought with the blood of children." This is to her a literal fact.

"Oh, God, the little children—to face it all! And our women are so brutal. They don't dream that in the great upheaval that's coming, their own children will meet with the same conditions. Then people go to church! They're mad as they were in the days of Babylon!"

Steubenville

We got to Steubenville. The clang of trolleys, the shriek of railways, noise and bustle, the bright green eyes of drug stores, red brick blocks—this is Steubenville's Main Street. Off the Main Street is the Secretary's office of the Steelworkers' Committee. Here the strike flowed above ground. Posters were hung in public places of Steubenville saying Mother Jones was going to speak. I felt that I had come back from Pennsylvania to America; the terror was lifted. In the organizer's office a union painter was asking for permission to keep his contract.

"If I don't keep my contract, the chimneys will rust."

It is strange to see life ebb out of the industry when the men flowed out of the mills by the Ohio River. The fires were banked; the industry was dead. In Fallonsby, Mingo, down into Wheeling and Bellaires, and the surrounding towns, there were only dead furnaces, empty mills, dark towns. Already the furnaces looked extinct. They looked as though they had been deserted for years.

I asked the Steubenville organizer: "What do you do to keep alive the enthusiasm among the men?"

"We don't have to do anything," he answered. "The men walked out and they stay out."

Meeting in Mingo

The meeting was in Mingo, the meagerest of steel towns. The mills, the workers—that is all. The meeting was in the town hall, a rickety building. We rode there in a bumping jitney around sharp curves, following the road which had been carved on the hillside above the river. Below is the dark bulk of the mills, whose black chimneys have been eaten by rust.

Mother Jones stood on a raised platform in the middle of the room. The hall was crowded with steel workers. Most of them stood. A few sat on benches. They crowded up to the platform. They stood there with upturned faces full of a mute devotion.

She is their mother in truth. She is the mother of the revolt in their souls. The hall was full of men who could not understand her words. What difference does it make what words she used? They understood her anger. Her defiance and her fearlessness they understood too. Their lack of knowledge of her words stripped her meaning to the fiery essentials.

It seemed wonderful to hear her say without police interference what she wanted to say. It was a great satisfaction to see a labor meeting in a town hall.

There was a ripple of uneasiness. Slips of paper were being passed from hand to hand. Something had happened. I went to the secretary through the crowd. He shoved a roll of leaflets in my hand. The leaflets were an

appeal to the workers to protest against the blockade of Russia.

"Lucky I saw that," he said. "Lucky I got 'em in time. Can't have things like that circulated here."

Above our heads Mother Jones was talking about Freedom and the solidarity of the workers.

"Why not?" I asked.

He looked at me despairingly. He was frightened.

"Why, they'd take it back to the Polish Priest! We'd have the state troops down on us in no time. They'd call us *Bolsheviks!*"

Mother Jones stopped speaking. Applause broke out. She plowed through the crowd to us. She read the leaflet.

"Well, what's the matter with it?" she asked. "Can't you protest about the blockading of women and children?"

The organizer pleaded with her. "You don't know what it's like here. I'm afraid they'll stamp us out." She snatched the word from him.

"Afraid? There's only one thing you should be afraid of—of not being a man!"

Weirton

Perhaps Mother Jones was too harsh to the organizer. The next day I heard from him that terror sniffs greedily on the outskirts of Steubenville. In Pennsylvania terror walks openly around. The strike flows underground. In Ohio the strike walks openly on the streets. Terror lurks out of sight. But it does not flow underground everywhere in Ohio. The organizer of Steubenville told me about the town of Weirton. This town is not incorporated. It has no charter. It belongs to a steel company. He gave me some affidavits of steel workers.

"Read these and you will see why I acted like I did last night," he said. "They searched the workers' houses. If they found any Socialist literature they railroaded them out of town. They took them out of bed at night. It made no difference that they owned their houses. It made no difference that their children were there. If we speak of Russia they holler 'Revolution' and will call in the troops on us."

Ohio and Pennsylvania are not much different after all. It was a matter of degree.

Thought had become socially perilous in both states. For all steel workers it was perilous to have socialistic opinions. Working people on strike had been forbidden to think together about starving and blockaded Russia. Their thoughts had been blockaded. It was dangerous for them to ask, "Why should we starve Russian children?"

Pensions

In the steel towns of Allegheny County, for all their foul slums, the brick houses shoulder each other in friendly fashion and there is fellowship in the welter of life which pours through the courts and alleys. But the smaller steel towns on the Ohio River are God-forgotten. The flavor of life there is that of stale hopelessness. The houses are down-at-the-heels. The streets are deep in mud. I walked down the streets of such a town with the organizer.

"I want to stop in," he said, "and see an old fellow. He's scabbing, but he can't help it."

The mills here made a pretense of work. The "white collar crew" and the foremen kept the furnaces alive. There were, too, a few "loyal men."

"This old fellow," said the organizer, "he feels so bad at what he's doing, I drop in just to cheer him up. He's an old union man. He belonged to the Sons of Vulcan and he was an Amalgamated man. He's within six months of getting his pension. He comes to me and he says, 'Son, I've been a union man all my life. What'll I do? My pension's six months off.' I said to him, 'Pa, you keep right on working.' It wasn't regular of me, but it didn't seem right to ask him to give up everything he had. One of his sons was killed in the steel works. His other one's got a parcel of children. He and his old woman are counting on the pension."

We picked our way through the mud and stopped by a meager frame house. One of the shutters hung awry in a

dismal fashion. The house was not more dilapidated than its neighbors. All the houses in this row had something wrong. We went inside. An old man sat listlessly by the window.

"Howdy," he said.

"How are you, John?" said the organizer.

"So so," he answered without looking up.

"How are you, Ma?"

"Oh, I'm fair," the old woman answered, her anxious eyes on the organizer's face.

The talk lagged. There was no light in that house. It was as if some unseen thing lay dead amongst us. The thing that was dead was the man's pride in himself. We rose to go. The old man bade us a listless good-by. He did not look at us. His wife followed us to the door.

"His heart's broke," she said. "He can't rest. He talks in his sleep that he's a scab."

Tamo Daleko

In Steubenville is a Serbian colony crowded in wooden houses near the mills. These houses have the slack, neglected air of steel town houses. Humanity bursts out from their doors. But the great Serbian holiday, Kossova day, was celebrated in this town. In this town the Serbs also celebrate the day which their families embraced Christianity. On such a day they give a Slava—a great feast. The memory of their oppression by the Turks is fresh. Their national independence is recent. Their age-long fight against the Turks lives in their songs.

I stood waiting to cross the noisy street. Trucks slam-banged past. The engine on the railway overhead hooted. A man beside me was whistling. He was whistling Tamo Daleko, the song which the Serbs sang in exile. After the great defeat in 1915 by the Austrians they retreated over the Ibar Pass, they went over the Albanian hills. They went to Corfu. They reconstructed their regiments and when every one thought Serbia dead, Serbian regiments reappeared on the Bulgarian front. Tamo Daleko was the song for a defeated nation. But the Serbs sang it when they marched to victory.

"Where did you learn that song?" I asked him.

"In Corfu. My father was a Serb in the Banat. When war come I go home. I march on the great retreat."

"How did you get back here?" I asked him.

"I get wounded on Monastir front. I am American citizen. They send me home from France."

"Are you striking?" I asked him.

The jam of the street loosened up. He strode on ahead. He threw at me over his shoulder,

"Sure I strike."

From his abundant gayety he turned to wave at me and went off singing to win the strike. His smile had the assurance of victory.

He made me understand the strike. The brothers of these men working in the steel mills had overthrown Czar and Austrian Kaiser. In America they fought Gary.

Johnstown

Here and there on the Ohio River some mill was flying a smoke streamer. Some towns on Monongahela did not strike. But Youngstown was dark as a pocket and Johnstown was shut down flat. Johnstown lies in a cup of hills. The Cambria Steel Company is the core of the town. From the railway station I looked down into the yards. Rust was over all. Piles of scrap covered with rust, mounds of billets covered with rust, carloads of pig-iron covered with rust. Paint scaling from black chimneys. Rust crawling up chimneys. In this yard nothing stirred. There was no sign of life.

A man walked slowly through the empty yard. It was startling to see anything move through that quiet place, through the mounds of iron on which rust had fallen like a red snow. It seemed the graveyard of industry. Johnstown's men had left the mills in rust and silence. Around the mills crowded wooden houses, desolate and blackened by years of falling soot.

The main street is noisy. The stores are full of cheap, bright colored things; stores with violent colored clothing, stores with shiny furniture. Windows full of enamel kitchen ware. All the things the workers' wives want, shiny and new. Up and down walked groups of idle steel workers, big men drifting on the slack tide of idleness into the hall of their headquarters. Cambria Steel shut down. For eight weeks nothing moving and nothing making, and

for eight weeks the encroaching rust thickening on the billets, crawling stealthily up the black chimneys.

During the first week in November a quarter of a million steel workers were still on strike. There was power and discipline in the self-control and quiet of the strikers. The roots of the strike went deep.

CHAPTER XII

SILENCE

The Miner's Son

FROM Wheeling and the other dark towns in West Virginia, and Ohio, I traveled back to Pennsylvania, a rangy, blunt featured lad for seat companion. I judged him to be about nineteen. We talked.

"I'd been visiting my folks in West Virginia," he said. "My Paw's a miner."

"Is he on strike?" I asked.

"Ahaw," the boy answered.

"There's been trouble in your part of the country."

"There's been trouble, but they won't touch Paw, for he's just staying home. They're all staying home."

"What do you do?" I asked.

"A steel worker."

"Where?"

"In the Edgar Thompson mills in Braddock."

"You're on strike too, then?"

He looked away. "There ain't any strike in our mill."

"Why did you go home?"

"Oh, work was slack. It was a good time to go."

"Work was slack because of the strike."

"Aw, it's nothing but a Hunky strike. The Hunkies walked out. They don't know what they want. They don't know what they're striking for. It's all over now, anyhow," he hurried on.

We were traveling along the Ohio River. The air was clear of smoke, the mills' fires were banked. The strike was flung across the country.

"It never was nothing but a Hunky strike," the boy persisted into my silence.

"You were never a union man?"

"No," he said. "You don't get on if you join the union."

"What does your father think about your scabbing?"

He looked away again. He shuffled uneasily.

"Paw—he don't know about it. I never told him there was a strike to our mill—and there ain't now any more."

I thought about this boy a great deal. Thousands of workers were still striking in Braddock. They didn't exist for him. They were Hunkies. This strike was a mass movement. It was a rank and file strike.

Youngstown was dark. Johnstown Mills were rusted, Wheeling was closed and Steubenville idle. The strike held in South Chicago. Messages came from the striking steel workers in Alabama and Colorado. But this boy who worked in the Edgar Thompson Mills didn't admit that the strike existed. He had been told that it "was over for all but a handful of Hunkies," by the bosses and by all the newspapers he saw.

So he went around carrying word that the strike was over. He believed it. He had to. Since his father was

a union man he could not have felt it right to scab even on Hunkies.

So he believed the strike was over as the people out in the world believed it.

The Americans in the steel mills are skilled workers. They stayed aloof. They minimized the strike. They called it off in their own minds. They helped the silence.

A Slavish organizer said to me bitterly:

"They are too proud to strike with Hunkies. They're not too proud to scab with negroes."

The Smothered Strike

It was through this boy's talk that the knowledge began to seep in on me of how powerful a weapon silence is.

Silence ebbed up around the strikers in a stealthy smothering tide. People outside thought the strike was broken.

A labor man from San Francisco stopped over to see Foster.

"You're winding up the strike now, aren't you?" he said.

That is what the labor people thought in San Francisco. News didn't get out. Silence covered everything. Suppression and silence like a cloud had settled down over the strike area. The papers had called off the strike in saying that the strike was over. The fight of these men still on strike didn't exist. From the outside the strike appeared dark as the towns. The public thought it was over. The only news of it appeared in obscure corners of financial

columns. Hidden away from the ordinary reader was the news that steel was not being made.

In those days one went out of the strike area from an atmosphere of hope to one of unbelief and depression. In Pittsburg it was hard to realize how stifling was the silence that surrounded the strike.

From visiting the dark towns I went to New York. In New York I had dinner with some labor sympathizers.

"Too bad the steel strike is going so badly," they said.

With some editors friendly to organized labor I talked about some articles. They thought the strike was a dead issue. Workers, editors, men who sympathized with labor, thought the strike was over.

I had come from the dark towns. I had seen close to the patient fabric of the strike. But what I had seen was locked within me. There was no means of telling it to any one.

What Everybody Knew

Before the strike began every one in America knew two things about the steel workers.

One was they were rich. Fabulously rich. They got fifty dollars a day. They all lived in steam-heated cottages with hot and cold running water.

The papers said so.

The farmers envied the steel workers. I found this out when I went to visit my own family.

"What are the steel workers striking about?" they wanted to know. "They've got everything they need.

They're better off than we." My family thought that most steel workers rode to work in their own cars. They thought that all steel workers' wives wore fur coats.

Every one knew that Foster was "red." There was an idea current that Foster had led out the contented steel workers on strike. He had led them out by hundreds of thousands. They would have been all right if he had let them alone.

Every one condemned the strike leadership.

Now every one thought that the strike of the steel workers was over.

The papers said so.

A good thing too.

To all the public of America nothing of the strikers' struggle or their reason for striking penetrated. The steel workers shouted out to the world for understanding, but it was as though they cried inside a vacuum. No one heard. No one knew what had happened. No one knew what these three hundred thousand men had struck for. No one knew the strike was still on.

English Workers

Sometimes it seemed like a joke on the public. What becomes of "democratic public opinion" when the steel masters do the publicity? And without this public opinion how are we to settle our disputes?

Silence was a strange work of hate to visit on the men who made wealth for the country, whose only crime was

to ask for conditions which the government gives its employees, the conditions which England's steel workers have long since had. The English steel workers sent this cable to the steel workers of America:

"On behalf of the one hundred and fifty thousand British Iron and Steel Workers who already enjoy all and more than you are asking for and who through joint representation of employers and workmen's organizations have the most successful machinery of industrial negotiations in the world, we send warmest wishes for the success of your fight on behalf of the workers in American Iron and Steel industry. By the refusal of the representatives of the Steel Corporation to submit dispute to arbitration, the corporation stands condemned."

During the beginning of the American steel strike, the railway workers of England struck also. I had a letter from England which described what happened in England. A great building was turned into publicity headquarters. An army of voluntary workers got together to explain to all England what the strike was about; Masters of Balliol and Dons of Cambridge writing for the strike, explaining, bringing light, telling the people what it was about, creating understanding. Artists and writers of England, economists and journalists, all working with the railway men, striving to create understanding between them and the public.

Between the steel workers of this country and such understanding stood the United States Steel Corporation, whose most powerful weapon was this deadening silence.

For days the only news of the steel strike that was carried, and it was carried in headlines, was that a bomb plot had been unearthed in Gary, and that the authorities knew who the authors of the plot were. The news of this plot died. It had no sequel. No one was arrested. There was no bomb plot. But in the mind of the public there remained the belief that the steel workers were dangerous people.

Dangerous and rich!

The Publicity Department

The link between the steel strikers and the public was the Publicity Director of the Steel Strike. This was the grand sounding name that they gave Edwin Newdick. One would suppose he had a staff working under him. He had no staff. He was the Publicity Department. If he ever had help it was casual and voluntary.

Edwin Newdick gave the news out to the papers. He saw the reporters. Every day news from the striking towns streamed in. Secretaries wrote letters telling the news. The news was digested, rewritten, sent out. There was one stenographer to help. At first even the mimeographing was done in the office. The Publicity Director and any one who chose to, ground off mimeographed copies of the news until the lights went out.

The Publicity Director also had the morale of the strike as his care. Strike bulletins went out three times a week. They were translated into six languages. All these things, the news for the public, the news for the labor papers, the

news for the secretaries and organizers, the bulletins addressing the strikers, the Publicity Director did them all. The immense strike and this one man to get news back and forth. It could not have been otherwise. The money had to be spent for bread for the workers.

Few friendly writers came to report the strike, but there were many hostile ones. The big publicity department of the United States Steel Corporation did its work thoroughly and did its work well.

The Letter From Alabama

The Publicity Department sent information to isolated people who wrote in for news. There was not money enough nor men enough to distribute the news to all the strikers. Every day people wrote to ask for news. Every day letters came like that of the boy in Alabama:

"I am Still In Doubt about the Steel Strike Situation.

"Is the Strike Still on ore has It Been called off.

"I Dont Beleive the Lying News Papers.

"If the Strike is over I Want to come North and get away from this yellow Bunch of Scabs.

"I was Working in the Carp Dept. of T. C. I. R. R. Co. and about 95 Percent of Carman and Helpers come out. But the Ensley Steel Mill never Lost 15 minutes on account of Strike. All the men that come out on Strike in the Car Dept. that had 4 years Experience got good jobs on the Railroads without any trouble.

"But the Helpers are the unfortunate ones.

"I had 3 years experience and the Foremans on these main Lines Said I would have to Start all over again Before I could get a Rate.

"And I don't think It is Right. Besides I could Not Live on 29c. a hr. Just such things as that is Driving a Lot of men Back to the U. S. Steel Corporation for Employment.

"if the B. R. C. of A. cared to Help the Steel Strikers they would manage some way to Put these Carman Helpers to Work Without Loseing their age. U. S. Steel Corporation put my Mother out of one of their houses that She had been Living in for 14 years Because me and my Brother Struck and If there is any Way that I can keep from faceing them Dogs and telling them I am Sorry I did Not Scab on for them, I don't Want to do It. they oun Every thing around here that is Worth owning and If I Don't get a job With the union Railroads Soon I am going to have to face them or Lose Everything I got in my house. Well I will close. Any Information you can give me will Be appreciated."

All the strike was in that letter. There were men like this everywhere, men who faced ruin, men who wouldn't scab, men so isolated that they didn't know whether the strike was called off or not. It showed, too, that their greatest enemy was silence. It was worse than violence. It was worse than white terror.

Espionage

Some of the Americans struck even in Allegheny County. I knew the wife of one, a roller. He was an Irish-American like herself. They had a pretty home, a flat that had nice painted floors with improvements. They had a piano.

"We'll have to move from here," she said. "They'll never take him back after the strike. He'll be blacklisted. You don't know what they make you suffer for being a union man in a town like this if you're an American. Oh, it's awful to live amongst spies! They talk about the Cossacks, but it's the spies that's bad. Tim never knows who's a friend. There is some one always watching. There's some one always trying to ferret out if a fellow holds a union card. I'll be glad to go. I'll be glad to live anywhere where I'm not spied on. When any one comes to see him, we never know whether he's a friend or if he's come to worm something out of Tim. I tell you it's an awful way to live when you don't know who your friends are. It's an awful way to live when people come friendly like, only to squeal on you. They found Tim out. They fired him. That was before the strike. He was helping in the organizing campaign. Then they tried to get him back. He wouldn't go. There's women afraid to be seen talking to me—because my husband's a Union man. They're afraid a spotter'll see us talking together. There's a free country for you! I tell you there's no such thing for a Union man in the steel towns."

CHAPTER XIII

COMMISSARY

Polish Strikers

FOR five weeks the strikers had nothing. They had been eating their skins. They lived on their savings. Some who had no savings existed from hand to mouth. Sometimes they picked up a chance bit of work, sometimes they were helped by their friends.

Then commissary stores were formed. Every strike town had such a store. Here strikers who needed it could come for groceries. The groceries were not for every one. There was not money enough to feed 250,000 strikers and their families. A narrow line had to be drawn between those actually in want and those nearly in want. When a striker applied for relief, one of the strike committee went around to talk the matter over with the family. I went around Pittsburg with a Polish steel worker making such visits of investigation.

It was not easy to find the places where the strikers lived. We went down black alleys, we passed refuse dumps that looked as though they had always been there. Layer on layer of refuse lay packed and rotting. The refuse dumps looked contemporaneous with a scaling, dilapidated

meeting house, which in its undignified old age had become a storehouse. It was falling to pieces. The paint had scaled from its pillars. Everything in that neighborhood was falling to pieces. This corner of Pittsburg told Pittsburg's history. The mild red brick of the houses had been blackened with the Pittsburg smoke. When these old-time inhabitants had gone to church in the meeting house, well-to-do comfortable families then lived a family in a house. Now a family lived in almost every room.

We found the house we were looking for. We had to bend down to get in because laundry was hanging thick in the front hall. We went down a flight of stairs which led to a back yard. The yard was bricked over and littered with débris. It was separated from the other yards by high blackened wooden palings. A stinking privy stood in one corner. The yard was as cheerful as a well, but the children played here.

We went into a room giving flush on the yard. It was clean and bleak. On each side of the stove were two chairs without backs. There was a table. A mechanical cradle rocked a baby to and fro—tick-tack, tick-tack. There were two other chairs in the room. That was all. There were curtains at the window that were patched and darned, and in spite of the invading grime, they were white.

The woman called her husband from an inner room. The room in which we stood had been the kitchen in the old days when this had been a private house. The room from which her husband came had been the coal cellar. It had no ventilation. Here in this cellar they slept—

they and their four children. In some steel workers' houses are the evidences of better wages, a comfortable sofa, a sewing machine, a new stove. Here there was no sign of such well-being. Bare walls and emptiness—that was all. Babies coming in such rapid succession had eaten up all this man could earn.

For a while they talked together in Polish. The conversation between the member of the strike committee and the man and his wife was earnest. They never smiled. Through it all ran the rippling laughter of the children. These people had brought with them such sound blood that their children were gay and bonny and full of laughter. They were three, four, and five years old. There was a baby of eleven months.

"They've decided," said my guide, "that they could wait three weeks more before they come to the commissary."

They had nothing and they could wait three weeks more. The endurance of women was a bulwark of the steel strike. Women like this, young and burdened down by the cares of their children, upheld it. Women who live without diversion, isolated by poverty from all that is beautiful in life, women whose eyes rest on nothing that is fair except the faces of their children, sacrificed for the strike. There were hundreds of women and thousands of them scattered through the steel towns who made up their minds that they could hold out a little longer, another week, two weeks more. One remembered them when one saw the commissary at work.

The Strike Woman

During this time I went with Father Kazinci to see one of his parishioners.

"That woman," he said, "should go to the Commissary. She's too tired to work as she does."

As the door opened a smell of suds enveloped us. The room was full of clothes. I have no memory of the furniture of the house. The tubs of water, the baskets of clothes, the heavy men's clothes drying on the line, hid everything else. On the floor there were puddles of water. More clothes were boiling on the stove.

You could not tell if the woman who had answered the door was young or old. She was tired even beyond embarrassment. Her dress was slopped with water and her hair was wet from the steaming tub which she had just left.

"Excuse, Father," she said. "The pails are so heavy when I come from the court I spill some always."

"Haven't you gone to the Commissary?"

"Not yet, Father."

"Are you going?"

"Not yet, Father. I wash for boarders."

"How many boarders?"

"Four. They sleep upstairs; me down."

The baby woke up and began to cry. She hushed it mechanically.

"It's too much for you, so many boarders," Father Kazinci said.

"How shall I live through the strike without boarders?" she asked him, hushing the baby on her damp shoulder. "It's always so; it's always strike. Without boarders how shall I live since I come to this country? I come nine years ago. There is a strike in New York. By and by they lose. My husband get a letter from a friend. He says there is work in the mines. We go to the mines. Not far from here, Father, that was. There come a strike right away."

"You've been in strikes almost all the time."

"Yes."

"How did you get on?"

She deserted the difficult English for her own language. Finding some consolation in his mute sympathy, she talked on monotonously. She was without protest as she sat and told of one strike after another, of bearing children and losing them, as one might speak of storms at sea. Strikes seemed to her normal. Strikes had followed her for nine years in her wanderings around America. She seemed like a stupid woman. She had the uncomplaining quality of a tired beast of burden.

I said to her, "I should think you would be tired of strikes."

Suddenly from her depths there flamed out at me her inner conviction. "If we don't strike what will happen to our children? It will always be the same for us working people if we do not keep together!"

Commissary in Braddock

In every striking steel town there was a headquarters where the people came for their strike rations. Any child on the street could tell you where the Commissary was. In Braddock the Commissary was in the basement of the parochial school which was built by Father Kazinci. Men passed, big parcels of food in their arms. Two children were tugging their basket up a narrow basement stairs. Groups of people were standing around. The basement was crowded. In the middle stood counters made of boards and trestles. All around barrels of potatoes, pyramids of canned goods. The smell of coffee was in the air; piles of good bread ready to be given out. Two men were weighing out the rations of potatoes; ten pounds for half a week for a family of six.

A low buzz of conversation filled the place. Two boys and their father packed up their food. Others stood patiently waiting their turn. It was a long line; Central Europe packed together, Pole, Slovak, Croat, Roumanian, Italian. All could have gone back to work had they chosen; there was no picket line in Braddock to shame them. There was everything to drive them back. Almost all of these men had large families.

Sometimes you see children with the pinched look of the starved Austrian children. I asked one boy how old he was. He answered, fifteen. He looked about twelve.

"We have six other children in our family, not counting the new baby."

There were plenty of new babies born during the strike. Many women faced having a new baby with nothing but the Commissary between them and starvation. There were so many young babies that a special milk fund was raised in Pittsburg so that the strike babies might be looked after.

I saw Gent, the local secretary, talking with one of the men. The man thought a moment, and then put back some of his rations. In Braddock and in many other towns the Commissary had over one-third more for people than had been planned. Those who had smaller families were asked to take only exactly what they needed. So with sacrifices piled on sacrifices the people were fed, the Commissary line grew. I watched them file past, pack their rations of potatoes, bread, beans, bacon, coffee, milk and sirup, leaving some behind when they could.

A woman with sharp shining eyes came up. She began wheedling for an extra can of tomatoes. Her voice had an indescribable mixture of mockery and impudence. She was a Gypsy woman unmistakably.

"She'd make off with an extra can of tomatoes behind your back," the organizer said, as she threw back some laughing mockery over her shoulder. "But there's one thing those folks don't do—they don't scab."

Strike Relief Money

The money for this food came from all over America. Some was contributed by the Internationals, but as the rank and file were the backbone of the strike, so the rank and file of labor supported the steel workers' commissary stores. Small unions in obscure towns voted the pay of a day's work to the steel workers. Working women sent in small sums. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America gave one hundred thousand dollars. This is an organization outside of the American Federation of Labor. When the receipt was sent from Washington headquarters of the A. F. of L. no letter of thanks was received from the Washington officials.

The steel strike, which extended over such a great area, now flowed out further and bound together the workers of North and South. It was a great work to feed so many workers. This money was contributed by individual sacrifices.

Meaning of the Strike

The Commissary in Braddock was over for the day. I sat with Father Kazinci in his living room. The room is oval. In one end a platform is raised up two steps above the room. From this eminence the Fathers sit and look over Braddock. The hill descends sharply from this point; St. Michael's Church is below, then Main Street. Beyond that the mill chimneys with their heavy crown of coiling smoke and the squalor of the first ward. Further the sudden river bank, almost as red as the mounds of red ore in the mill yards.

We sat a while in quiet. Father Kazinci spoke:

"How do they do it?" he wondered. He spoke impersonally, as though to himself. "What gives them their fortitude? All these men we saw to-day are doing something cruelly difficult, something which takes the highest courage. They stay out and see negro strike-breakers take their jobs. Think what sacrifice every day means, what desperate resistance. These people have given up their income voluntarily. They have risked their jobs, their only source of income.

"Our people have laid by money in the bank. They are not gamblers with chance like Americans. The future is a vivid thing to them. They fear old age, they fear sickness, they know that lockouts come. They know the mills shut down. They insure against these things by painful savings. They never touch that sacred insurance fund against disaster; it is inviolate. They are now using these

savings, the fruit of their self-denial. They are pouring the money out; they are pouring it out on the altar of liberty—liberty to join their own unions, freedom from the twelve-hour day. Think of them—hundreds and thousands of them making these sacrifices together. People have to think a cause just to do such things. They have to believe in it with all their hearts. They have to have courage. It takes courage for a single man to do this. Think what it means for men with children. Think what it means for women to stand back of their men. I go among my people. I see them holding out. I wonder how they do it. I wonder at the force within me.

"But they're striking for a better life for their children. They're through with espionage that boycotts union men. They want to put an end to this dehumanizing double shift. Why, do you know, a Braddock mill superintendent stopped one of my people on the street the other day. He was an old-timer, a faithful worker. The mill superintendent was surprised to see him idle.

" 'Aren't you working?' he asked.

" 'No, I'm not working.'

" 'Why not?'

" 'I'm on strike; I'm taking a holiday. I'm paying myself back those twenty Christmases I worked for the company.'

"But even such things don't explain their courage. I tell you the history of this steel strike is the history of the endurance of men and women."

CHAPTER XIV

ANONYMOUS PEOPLE

The Strike Baby

ANONYMOUS people like these women willing to wait for the Commissary made the backbone of the strike. There were plenty who were cowards at heart. There were plenty who were waiting to sneak back. Not all people were unselfish about the Commissary, plenty of strikers were willing to take all they could get.

The courageous minority stiffened the morale of the wavering ones. They were to be found everywhere.

Through making visits with Father Kazinci I got to know what sort of people carried the strike on their backs. These were people like Yanski and his wife.

There was a door in the first ward that I often noticed. Its inner panels were green as spring, with a border vivid russet. It was the most hopeful thing in that drab neighborhood, a signal to the world—"Happy people live here."

Everything in this house matched that painted door, beginning with the woman who opened it. The walls had been freshly painted. The holy pictures made violent splashes of red against the new paint. In the back room was a bed of majestic size. I never saw such a magnificent

bed. It was shining brass. It had crocheted coverings. The coverings were lined with bright blue. There was blue ribbon on the pillows, and they were covered with embroidered pillow shams. Beside the bed was a cradle. This, too, was beribboned, and in it lay a very little baby.

"That baby," the woman explained, "is the strike baby. The strike was a fine time for me to have a baby. Yanski is home. You see, Father, it was like this. The strike is a bad time; it is a bad thing that a man shall not be at work and that he shall spend his money so he may get his rights. Yanski and I talked it up. 'They talk of the strike,' he said. 'What do you think?' 'Strike,' I said. 'Go out with the men.' I read the demands. They were good demands."

"Do most of the women read the demands?" I asked.

She said: "When your man goes out on strike you wish to know what for. When your man goes out and is not earning money any more you would be a fool if you didn't wish to know what gain there is in it for him and yourself. Well, we talked it up. Yanski said, 'When have I had a rest? Never. We will have a good time this strike.' So we did. He painted everything. He made the cradle; he made that beautiful chest of drawers from old packing boxes. He stained and polished it. And when the baby was born, what a help! For Yanski is handy in the house —not like some men."

Yanski came in, a comical looking fellow, with high cheek bones and small beady eyes. From the way he and his wife talked I knew that they enjoyed life together.

The atmosphere of holiday was still around them. Yanski had painted the door and made the cradle and made the chest of drawers, and had had fun for once. There was in that home life, young energy, wholesome enjoyment. It made you feel as good to be with Yanski and his wife as being with happy children.

We asked a question which Father Kazinci often puts.

"Do you ever think of going into the country to live?"

"We're saving to go," Yanski said. "We want to live where there are green fields."

Old Country Children

Next door to Yanski lived a handsome woman who had the high vitality that makes the Anglo-Saxon, in comparison, seem meager. She was spending her passion on the desire to go back home. She had four boys. They were dark-skinned and blue-eyed and wide-faced. They rushed in and out as if the store of energy pent within them was so great that they could rush through a lifetime like that without even being tired.

"These are my Old Country boys," she told me, "all born over there, all born in my home."

There seemed to be some special virtue to these boys in her eyes as though through them she had brought part of her home with her.

"You want to go back?" I asked her.

"Want to go back!" she echoed. "I would rather die on a dunghill there than in a palace here."

I did not get to the bottom of her fury. It went so deep in her that she spoke with disparagement of the three children born here. She openly and passionately preferred her "Old Country boys." In answer to my question as to why she so preferred the Old Country, she flung at me:

"There, there is life!" She threw her arms out in a wide gesture.

The year before I had seen the people of Hungary stream out in the holiday of Fingsten—the holiday of summer, which dates from some pagan festival. Even under the pressure of war, the spirit of life there had remained opulent. A pleasure-loving spirit was abroad. All of youth had streamed out of the villages to greet summer. The young women looked like magnificent full grown flowers, the older women like ripe fruit, for they age in a mellow, generous fashion. I took it that this woman lashed our country with the fury of her scorn because her eyes rested on smoke and ugliness, and there was no holiday of summer. She was a woman who looked as though she should have lived in a peony garden; instead she lived in a Braddock courtyard, where it seemed to be uncertain whether the garbage would be removed this year or next. Yet her indignant fury must have had a deeper reason.

Now she was using this fury in going on strike with her husband. He was a handsome, easy going fellow. You felt she did his anger for him.

The Contented Woman

In the midst of this discontent I came across unquestioning women, who had brought with them from their lands a deeper acceptance of life than any we know. They were the product of calmer days and of horizons not bound by friezes of mill chimneys. I have never seen any one so secure as one of them seemed. Peace lived in her house. Her husband was sleeping on a wide davenport, her little girl was sitting opposite her playing quietly, the kettle hummed, the stove shone. She had the full array of the small adornments of life which the women have when they can—clean curtains, holy pictures making crimson splashes on the wall, a shelf dressed in a linen towel with a deep border of crocheted lace, on which stood a crucifix flanked by two candles.

She was a plump, comely woman, dressed in a house gown of lavender with a wide apron and a frilled cap on her head. Her husband worked at night, and then he came home and had his breakfast, and she could watch him all day while he slept. Her life was uncomplicated. She had only one child, and she was content with a deep inner contentment. It shone from her like a light. It made one happy to see it. One finds many women here who have peace in their eyes.

Why have they such steadfast tranquillity? It may be because the doors of life and death are forever open upon them. They do not question either. *We* ignore birth and refuse to admit the thought of death, so we limit life.

These two great doors swing forever within their sight. Their men work in a perilous occupation, and they themselves go through life, an endless procession of children being born to them. Here and there you meet a woman submerged in the struggle. For the most part the women I saw in the steel towns are adequate. They face life with tranquil assurance.

But they do not like it here. Nor have they become assimilated. They do not learn the language, they do not mingle with Americans, and they seem to keep their village feeling and their village customs, as far as they can, like some sacred guarded flame.

Rosie's Measles

Whenever Father Kazinci and I plunged into the welter of life of the First Ward, children ran to him. They all loved him. One day as we visited from house to house a little girl followed us. We would find her still waiting for us as we came out of houses. At last she came up with desperate boldness. Her eyes on the grimy snow, she whispered something. Father Kazinci bent over.

"I can't hear you, my child. Speak louder."

With dazzling courage she managed to speak aloud. "Will you visit my Mama?" she said. She had followed us for blocks to be able to get out these words. It was a splendid moral victory. We lost no time in going.

A young looking woman was waiting in the door.

"My Rosie, can you beat her? When she sees you,

Father, 'I shall get him,' she says. Out she goes like a bird flying. I call to her. 'Rosie, come back! You don't dare, Rosie!' "

The woman shook with laughter until I felt that her house was a warm-hearted place. I knew people have a good time when they gather around the table of Rosie's young mother.

She made jokes about everything, this woman. She joked about herself and what she said to her husband when she went to get him out of the saloon in the times before prohibition. Then she made a grim joke that I have heard more than once. When Father Kazinci asked her: "Are all your children living?"

"Indeed yes, Father. I have no luck. Every one of them alive. You see this child," she said, "this is my Rosie. She has the will of a mule. You can lay her over your knee and spank her three times a day and she does what she wishes. What does she do when she has the measles? When my back is turned she gets up and goes to school, because a child who never has been absent from school will get a silver bell. She wants to be never absent from school. With measles all over her and red as a beet, she gets up and goes. And what does she do the rest of the time? She sits up in bed watching her measles fade, with the little glass that her father shaves by her so that she may go back to school."

There is magic in the Slavic character which had made life cheerful even in the face of steel mill and smoke barrier. The rubbish of a month was rotting unchecked

outside, but Rosie's house inside was shining with color and cleanliness. It was a home as sound as good bread.

Two of the older children came in. They bowed to Father Kazinci politely. It was like the old-fashioned "making manners." Then, without being told, they hung up their coats and hats. This was a sight in the steel workers' families which fascinated me. This woman confided to me the secret of the children's astounding goodness.

She threw her hands up. "Ma'am," she said, "if our kids be bad we all go crazy together. In two three rooms children's *got* to be good!"

How They Came Here

The strike is based on the thousands of people like these in Braddock. They came to this country seeking a wider opportunity. They came to this country to seek freedom. Hope brought them here.

As the pioneer spirit of America slackened and grew fat on possessions and prosperity they replenished it with their adventurous blood. Their men are strong. Their women have the tranquil eyes of those accustomed to looking over wide fields. Their faces are still brown with wind and sun. They brought with them a bright treasure of hope and it is buried under the garbage of the streets.

This young army came here and spilled its youth and its strength over the streets of Youngstown, Homestead and Braddock. They came here flying the bright banners of courage and freedom.

As one goes about among the women, the two things that it hurts most to hear them talk about are their memories and their hopes.

This strike was concerned with these dreams and these hopes. In the last analysis a home is what any strike is about. This strike concerned the right of organization, hours and conditions. Follow these things to their source and they will lead you back to a home and a woman sitting in it with a child in her arms. This fight for organization and hours will take you back from the sinister splendor of the mills to a kitchen where children are getting ready to go to school.

PART FOUR

THE DYING STRIKE

CHAPTER XV

THE BREAK

The Mills Are Pried Open

UNTIL the second week in November there was scarcely a break in the strike. Then disquieting rumors began to fly in to the central office in Pittsburg. Marshal law in Gary had been a mighty strike-breaker. The soldiers and the bosses had acted together, intimidating the workers. Here and there a mill idle for five weeks would be pried open. Each mill that was pried open stabbed the courage of the workers. The cowards went from their own towns, where they were ashamed to scab, and scabbed in distant towns. In this way the towns exchanged their men without courage. The indifference of many of the Internationals played its part. Many of the craft unions involved in the manufacture of steel had not been anxious to see steel organized. Many craft unions have never cared to organize unskilled labor.

Now happened an amazing thing. The Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers had survived in the steel towns in independent plants. In these towns it still had contracts. Its membership had been increased to 100,000 by the strike situation and the National Com-

mittee. The officials of the Amalgamated had never organized steel. They had not believed steel could be organized. They had profited through the organization of steel. Now in the fifth week of the strike they declared that they must keep their contracts. They protested against mills being picketed in which they had contracts. They wanted their skilled men to go back to work and keep these contracts. They wanted the laborers who had been added to their ranks in so many thousands to return with the skilled men. It was a blow at the morale of the strike. There was a stormy meeting of the National Committee in Pittsburg. Organizers of Youngstown and Steubenville and other places where there were contracts protested violently. They protested in vain. The contract with the employer was more important to the officials of this union than the welfare of the strike.

After the strike was over the Amalgamated, with its new members and its swollen treasury, withdraw from the National Committee. Its organization refused to have anything further to do with the Committee which had succeeded in organizing 250,000 steel workers. At the A. F. of L. Convention in Montreal all efforts to urge it to come in again were fruitless. The Amalgamated, whose union comprised more steel workers than any of the other twenty-four Internationals involved in the strike, broke up the old National Committee as in the early days of November it helped to undermine the strike.

Youngstown Office

After six weeks a red flare startled Youngstown's skies. The Ohio works opened up. They had been pried open, people said, by negro strike-breakers. Negroes had been brought into Youngstown in sealed box cars by night. Rumor flew through the town. Everything was going to open. Every one was going back to work and the strike would be lost. The Americans were trickling back. All the papers were saying the mills would be open wide. All the strikers read the papers. Every one had been told by boss or by tradesman that he alone would be staying out. Every blast of the furnace cried to the workers, "Come back and work; the strike is over."

All Sunday the strikers were poised fearfully as though upon the brink of disaster. All day one had the sensation of being on a jam of logs that was about to break. Panic and fear and doubt might do its work among the men.

Youngstown Office buzzed with the news of the action of the Amalgamated. In many places near Youngstown plants would be affected. Into a silence a big Irishman threw with slow bitterness:

"I wonder how much they got from the steel companies for keeping those contracts."

Men came into Strike Headquarters, a steady trickle of them. They wanted to see McCadden, they wanted to see Hammersmark. They wanted to talk with some one. You had the sense of their coming, as they had so often, for moral support. They wanted reassurance; they wanted

denials that the strike would be called off. Under their doubt was stubborn patience. They came to seek courage. It gave one courage to see them; they were not men to be stampeded. They had fought so long. Yet no one knew what would happen. No one could be sure that a mighty stream of men would not pour back in the mills. The scene was set for it. The setting of the stage was the blast works. The opening had been announced by papers and by the bosses.

Picket Line

I went out to see the disaster. It was not yet five in the morning, and black as midnight except where the fiery salvos of the blast furnace of the Ohio Works shattered the night with glory. I was alone in my ride in the street car except for two uneasy scabs. I didn't look at them; I didn't like to. The right of the individual workman to work when and how he liked seemed as tenable as the right of the individual citizen to desert to the enemy in wartime. I got out of the car. A man detached himself from the darkness.

"Ma'am, I come to meet you," he greeted me.

In silence we went toward the works.

All the thought of the strikers is focussed on the picket line. There goes on daily a terrible and silent contest of wills.

We walked through the darkened streets. A group of policemen were on a corner. We exchanged "Good mornings" as we passed by. Here in Ohio peaceful picketing

was legal. The police knew the organizers. Some of the deputies were even sympathetic to the strikers. Up the side streets stood dark groups of men. I knew that on the streets leading down hill toward the works more men were posted. They were there to guard the strike. They had been there night after night to see that no betrayer slipped through to work.

A man with tools came hurrying along.

"W'ere you going, boy?" my guide challenged.

"Going to work up to Youngstown—I ain't scabbin'; you didn't think I was." He was young and eager. He couldn't bear the implications that he was a deserter.

Another man scuttled through the dark, head down, tool box held tight.

"W'ere you going, boy?" the challenge came again. There was no menace in his deep voice, no note of bullying; only a sorrowful and accusing gravity. "Why you going to work, boy? Don' you know we're on strike?" The man hurried without stopping down the street whose darkness was now violently torn asunder by the sudden splendid fury of the blast. The buildings, the high chimneys and walls and bridges, the houses and the knots of men were etched black against the magnificent violence of flame. The picket line thickened. The men moved up and down sluggishly, enough to conform with the law, which advises pickets to keep moving. A patrol wagon came past. Policemen got out of it near the gate of the mills. Three big wagons thundered over the bridge leading to the mill gate—provisions for the scabs.

A trickle of men began coming over out of the mill. They crossed another group coming in. From the point of view of the quiet, watching men those were traitors, deserters, men of the spawn of Judas. The pickets were quiet and watchful. No one spoke. Their scarcely moving line gave the impression of a slow drifting stream. The men coming and going from work walked swiftly, head down, shoulders hunched, hurrying to get out of sight of the watchful line with its terrible and accusing quiet.

Day came creeping on us; we could see each other's faces. A light primrose stained the sky which seemed far off and remote. When dawn touched the men they looked cold and tired; they looked anxious and worn. The whistle gave tongue. More men hurried out of the mill, more men scuttled in. The patrol wagon came up; the police hopped in. It was seven o'clock; the morning vigil was over. The strike was unbroken. The deluge had not occurred. The men weary with watching, weary with inaction and with suspense, drifted to their homes.

Steel Workers' Children

"You're cold, ma'am," my guide said. "I want you should come to my house to get breakfast; my house ain't far."

He would not let me go. He couldn't see me get on a car without a cup of coffee. We walked past little detached dwellings, small frame houses, some few of concrete. Here and there a crimson rambler was planted

over a door; there were porches, and plots of ground surrounded the houses. This was Steelton, the most decent steel community that I had seen.

A big boy met us at the gate on his way to school. Inside the kitchen stood rows and rows of polished shoes ready to put on. Brightly polished shoes standing neatly two by two. Any parent will understand what this means. Few families can get boys to black their shoes the night before.

The striker's wife greeted me like an old friend. Had they gone back, she wanted to know? It wasn't true—thank God! Were there more scabs than yesterday? Above all, had any of their own people gone back? Was there treason in the house?

The children came in. They went to the sink to finish their washing. An older girl, a blonde child with a wide placid face, turned the skeptical and disillusioned eye of an elder sister upon the backs of the boys' necks. They went into the next room and got clean patched shirts. My hostess fried eggs for Mike and myself and poured us coffee. They talked. The children ate. I have never seen such well-behaved children. They did not interrupt the conversation. No one cried out, "Ma, where's this—Ma, I can't find that." They dressed and ate their breakfast and went to school, and before they went they said good-by and shook hands with me.

Mike had been here for twenty years. After twenty years of work underground in the mines and in the heat of the steel mills, after twenty years of unremitting industry,

he had bought a four-room house. It had a grape arbor and a little garden. He has eight children. That is what the conditions of labor in this country had permitted him to achieve. He is incomparably better off than the average steel worker.

Why Men Strike

The baby came and laid her head against Mike's knee, and Tisa, who is still nearly a baby, climbed up and put her arms around his neck; he enclosed them in a great arm.

"They only get to know their papa now, since the strike. When father works fourteen hours night and ten light, he never sees the children." He nodded.

"You see that's why I struck. How do you think the strike go? You think we goin' to win now—pretty soon?"

His wife broke in: "If this strike ain't won, we're goin' to win another strike. Our people ain't never goin' to stop until our fathers can be home sometimes and not be just like a horse—take out of the stall and put back in the stall."

"You see, twelve hours—that's too long for a man to work. A man can't work so long and be anything but tired out like a beast. I used to be a miner when first I worked in this country—we worked thirteen hours. We struck. We don't win. We go to jail because we picket. We get sent to jail for all kinds of reasons. But now the miners, they only work eight hours.

"You see those boys of mine; I got four. By and by

they goin' to grow up, maybe they goin' to go and work in the mills like me. I want my boy should get a chance to read more than me. I want those boys to have a chance to learn more than I have a chance. I want they shouldn't have to work fourteen hours night and ten hours light. I want when they're old enough to get married that they see their babies sometimes when they're little. We all feel like that, but when we see how so many Americans went back so soon as the mill is opened, we Slovaks feel like we was out skating and that we skate out far and the ice cracks and we look around and only us, everybody else goes ashore—but we got to win just the same, sometime!"

"Of course we got to win," his wife said. "What you been through before we can go through again and we can't go through anything so bad as we've been through! When my oldest girl was a baby and before my big boy you saw going to school was born, father was on strike in the mines. Those days they was worse to strikers than they are now.

"You think they do everything to strikers now. They do even worse then, in those days! So father got thirteen months for picketing. We had got all our furniture paid for except fourteen dollars. After they took father away I couldn't pay any more. They took away everything from my house. They took my bed from my baby. They took my cook stove. They didn't leave me nothing.

"I sat down on the floor of my empty house with my baby in my arms and thought about my new baby that was going to come, and I thought, 'No matter, I'm a strong young woman'; I thought, 'Never mind what they do to me,

I'll take care of both my babies until father gets out!' I sat like that on the bare floor of my house and thought to comfort myself that father was right to strike like he did and that I was going to fight shoulder to shoulder right alongside of him. I know we got to win, because it's right we should win."

Fighting Women

Next day I went to the women's meeting in the basement of the Slovak church in Steelton. It was not far from the Ohio works, near the house where I had had breakfast. There were perhaps seventy women. Some carried babies. They came from the new houses.

The woman who had given me breakfast was there; I recognized women I had seen before. I had gone with her to the houses of many women, while she told them of the meeting. How clean their houses were; how they rejoiced in their new-found comforts. How happy they were living in houses that had little yards where their children could play.

They talked with me about the strike. They asked practical questions; they gave practical answers to questions. What they hated was the twelve-hour day. They understood less about the right of collective bargaining, though some were clear-minded about it. They wanted their husbands to work as men in other industries worked. They wanted leisure for their husbands. They wanted their boys to work under better conditions.

They assembled in the basement of the church—fine

looking women, young wives and old mothers, middle-aged mothers of families. Most of them wore on their heads the frilled mob caps which the women in steel towns wear to keep the slack from their hair.

They did not sit quiet the way the men did at meetings; they talked back to the organizer. He sweated under their questions. They wanted to know the exact status of the strike; they wanted to know their chances of winning. They wanted to know if they got out on the picket line if it would help. Then he talked to them earnestly in their own language, and they listened, swayed by his oratory, sunk in his account of the battle. He held them in his hand. You could see indignation mounting in their eyes, the old women nodding their heads in affirmation of what he said. He was telling them the age-old story of the people's fight. He was relating it with the strike.

He eased himself into a lighter tone. He made a joke. Laughter greeted him. They rocked with good earthly laughter. They were not afraid of life, they were not afraid of a fight, nor of a homely joke. They could love and fight and laugh. It was comforting to look in their eyes. It was terrible to think that all their sacrifices and all their courage might be in vain.

CHAPTER XVI

WHITE TERROR

Johnstown Mob

AFTER the strike had lasted some weeks, people said openly in the towns that the strike could not be broken peacefully. Members of the Chamber of Commerce said it, leading citizens. They formed vigilance committees. The Steel Company officials helped them.

James Maurer, President of the Pennsylvania State Federation of Labor was threatened by a mob of dubious origin. It was said that money was spent by Chambers of Commerce in their effort to terrorize him. Boys formed the mob and hoodlums. Maurer was dangerous. Maurer had said if he had the power he would stop every wheel in the state if the steel workers' rights and liberties were not returned to them, so terror whined at his heels.

In many towns these terroristic groups, under the name of citizens' committees, were organizing to stampede the strikers, to drive out organizers. This was done in towns where the strike had been peaceful, where there had been no conflicts with the police.

Johnstown was such a town. The first week in Novem-

ber Foster went there to speak. At that station they warned him it would be dangerous. He went on. Conboy and Foster were walking up the street; they were going up to the hall. A mob of men bore down on them; they were surrounded and separated. They took Foster to the train, a gun in his ribs. There was no police protection for Foster. The state constabulary were quiet. When mobs are made up of leading citizens, mobs are unmolested. They put Foster on the train.

That night the mob surrounded the strikers' hall. They drove the organizers out of town. They pried open the mills. The scene was set for the mills to open. It was more spectacular than the Youngstown opening. It was advertised through the papers. Of the 18,000 men on strike only 800 went back. But the opening had been made. Smoke rolled up to the sky. In these mills where no smoke had been, the fire of the blast took their heart from the men. The sense of disaster deepened in all the towns. The small striking communities were steeped in doubt; the bosses went around to the women undermining their courage, threatening that if their men did not go back there would never be any work for them. In isolated places every power the company knew was brought to bear on the strikers to make them believe that they alone were hanging on, to make them believe the strike was over everywhere else, and that people were only striking in this town.

Youngstown Arrests

Every day brought the news of fresh arrests. When an organizer was missing for a few hours foul play was feared. A sense of anxiety oppressed every one. Every one was restless. A sinister menace poisoned the steel towns. It came from the spies, from professional strike-breakers. It had in it the whining of the mob spirit. The steel companies had massed their forces against the strikers.

Conboy and Karowsky were railroaded out of Johnstown. Geoletti stayed to brave the mob. They could not make him go. Liley, of Butler, was arrested. Meetings were no longer allowed in Youngstown. Youngstown looked hungrily at Johnstown's vigilance committees. The men were not going back to work fast enough. Citizens' committees were formed in Youngstown too. Strike meetings were forbidden. "Black-hand" letters poured into the organizer's office. McCadden was arrested on the charge of "criminal syndicalism." The charge was not pressed, for, as some one said, you could as soon get McCadden on a charge of syndicalism as you could get Samuel Gompers on a charge of reading the I. W. W. Preamble for morning prayers.

I went over to Youngstown again. I had seen Youngstown triumphant, the laughter of victory on the men's faces. I had seen them stiffen up on the brink of disaster. Now courage was oozing from the men, and as courage oozed from the men hope went from the organizers. There was a different atmosphere now. They began to believe

that they were going to lose. They had suffered in vain. Suspense and doubt had their way with them.

It was hard in those days to talk to the men and meet their questions. More and more the Slavs felt that they were deserted on a piece of ice that had broken off and that a dark widening piece of water separated them from the land.

I went down to the picket line, this time in East Youngstown. The car was packed with scabs, many of them negroes. The police were out. Another woman reporter was with me. The police eyed us with suspicion. According to the law, we kept moving. We walked up and down slowly. There were fewer pickets. There were more men going to work. The strike was not over; but it was waning. The courage of some of the men was such that they might yet be out if the strike had not been called off.

The police watched us narrowly. Formerly they had appeared neutral to the strikers; now they were hostile. Presently I saw the chief of police speak to the woman with me. She came over to me. What he had said was:

"Stop interfering with these men going to work or I'll run you in mighty damn quick."

It was enough to be a woman and stand on the picket line in those days to have to run the gauntlet of police intimidation. In East Youngstown feeling had run high; women had come out on the picket line, women had thrown pepper. I explained that we were not pickets, but reporters.

"Like hell you are," said the chief. "I know reporters when I see them; I know who you are."

The Scab

One of the organizers offered us a ride back to the office. It was early. The office was full of men. Some men were leaning back in chairs against the wall; some men were in front of the bulletin board. Men came in and went out. Every one was torn between hope and fear. It had not been as bad as they expected. It was bad enough. We stood around aimlessly. I made talk with Olchen, the Slovak organizer.

"How are the meetings?"

"Good enough," he answered. "The men come. You remember the first time you are here?"

I remember the shock of their laughter. Olchen looked around; he stood there anxious. Suspicion was in the air. Each man searched every man's eye. Every man asked every other man mutely:

"Are you going back? Are you going to hang on?"

Olchen spoke again. "You remember how it was; how they laughed, how they stamped in the hall, hardly there was room for them. Now they come quiet, now they come asking . . ." His voice trailed off.

I looked around at their faces. Now they came like empty vessels, drained of their courage, asking mutely to be filled with that first heady wine.

Out in the hall there was a noise. It was the noise of a man sobbing. Talk stopped in the office. It was deathly quiet. Men drifted to the door to look out. A big Polish steel worker was sobbing with his face against the wall.

Nobody spoke; every one was quiet. His disaster had overtaken all of us. The organizer who had been talking with him turned to us.

"He's been scabbing. He thought everybody'd gone back. They told him everybody'd gone back. He found out it wasn't so; he found he was sold out. He can't stand it, he's been scabbing." Two or three of the men gathered around him trying to comfort him. It was as though we heard the voice of the strike crying in that hall. We turned away. Talk was resumed again. A man said:

"To win they've got to make a coward of a fellow."

Another answered: "That's what the steel companies make when they make steel nowadays. They're making cowards and they're making traitors."

Thanksgiving at Donora

On Thanksgiving Day I went to Donora to have dinner with the strikers. The road that takes you there is called the scenic railway. It goes through a country as romantic as the Berkshire Hills. There are abrupt hills and swift streams, dense woods. This sweet country has here and there a blot. Little, black sordid towns. Towns made of shacks. Towns without self-respect.

Donora is a long, thin, meager town. It is desolate and abandoned, an aggregation of mean streets and mean houses.

Groups of men were standing about the corners idle.

I asked the first man I met where the strike headquarters was. He directed me to the Lithuanian Hall. Both strike headquarters and the commissary were in this hall. The never-failing group of men were around the bulletin board reading the latest strike news.

"Where's Hodge?" I asked.

"Two plainclothes men came and got him—we're afraid they are going to arrest him just to spoil our dinner." One of the men took me down the stairs.

"I tell you I had a pretty hard time to keep the boys quiet after they took Hodge away," he told me. The smell of turkey was in the air; long tables were set out. The men were eating their dinner or lining up for it—the dinner was five cents a plate to those who could afford it. The place was full of good fellowship. But there was something else in the air—an uneasiness—as if everybody was waiting for something to happen—a lurking sense of disaster.

I went up to the office of the Constabulary. State troopers were lolling around in chairs, out of uniform. The burgess was in his office. I talked with him.

"You have had no trouble here?" I asked. "The strikers have been quiet?"

"The strikers have been quiet enough," he agreed. "Our people are all right; it's these agitators." He shot a poisonous glance at Hodge who had come down the stairs and stood in the hall talking with the Chief of Police.

The burgess was a soft looking little man. He had a red face, a receding chin and watery eyes.

"Outside agitators was what made the trouble." He was sure of that. The people were all right until they came. The men who walked out of the mills had always been happy and satisfied. They walked out just to make a living for these agitators. Organizers are professional trouble makers who make a living stirring up contented people.

He talked on querulously in this fashion. It was his mental bankruptcy that offended me. The officials talked like this in all the steel towns. Organizers alone had made the trouble. The obvious answer is, "Lynch the organizers. If you can't lynch them, deport them, arrest them—and the ignorant foreigners will be good again."

Things were stewing and boiling in Donora. The superintendent of the mills spoke from his automobile urging the workers to come back. No one stopped him. Had a strike sympathizer spoken to the men, urging them to stay out, he would have been arrested, he would have been "inciting to riot."

"Mind you, no speaking," the Chief of Police threw after Hodge as we walked away.

"I get you," Hodge said good-temperedly. We returned to strike headquarters. When Hodge came the uneasiness lifted only a little. He told them that he had been sent for to promise that there would be no speeches after the Thanksgiving dinner. You felt that the men were apprehensive and uneasy. There were citizens' committees in Donora. There was no telling when the mob spirit would unloose itself. The strikers knew it.

CHAPTER XVII

THE DYING STRIKE

The Funeral

FOR a time the riding down of people appeared to have ended. There were no more wholesale arrests. But the Constabulary stayed in the towns and though they were comparatively quiet, we heard from them from time to time. One day in strike headquarters in the Monongahela House, word came that the Constabulary had broken up a funeral in Braddock.

There had never been such a funeral. There was no end to it. First there were many carriages and afterwards an interminable procession of black clothed men under umbrellas. It was a cold day. Rain fell in a drizzle. It froze as it fell. No one knew the dead man's name. There seemed to be no reason for the breaking up of the funeral.

During the afternoon men came dripping into the office. Huge silent men. They had not much to say. Yes, the mounted police broke up the funeral. The men had run. "They said there were too many of us," was their explanation. This funeral had become a procession, a demonstration, and such things were not allowed in Braddock.

The mourners did not seem surprised to have the funeral

broken up. The "Cossacks," as they knew them, were there to prevent, inhibit, invade other assemblages as harmless as funerals. Life is violent here. Men were killed in Braddock in 1916. Homestead and its memories of the great strike of 1892 are across the river.

From the sparse trickle of talk I got the impression of a very large funeral—a funeral as long as Main Street. During the afternoon the funeral took form in my mind; it became as something I myself had seen. A heavy picture, black on black, black with a massive background of smoke. Smoke uncoiling itself to the clouded sky, smoke of such density as to seem solid. This smoke was the background of a hurly burly of men in heavy shoes, slipping and sliding on icy pavements.

I saw it as if I had been there, the piles of dirty snow, the oily smoke writhing upwards to the slate colored sky. The wind wrenching umbrellas from hands. Black and white streets shining with rain.

There was no clew among all these taciturn mourners as to why they had come in such numbers. But they had come from Monessen and Donora and Duquesne as easily as from South Pittsburg. It seemed that every Slav and Pole and Roumanian came to the funeral. They came from Rankin stewing over the smoke of the mills, and from Charleroi. Men had come who did not belong to the dead man's church or his society.

The room began to smell of wet leather, of black dye, of men. There was a clash of gutteral talk from a group in a corner. A big fellow shook his fist upward in a slow

menacing gesture. There was something solemn in this shaken fist, the symbol of revolt.

It was part of some story. A crash of laughter followed—disquieting laughter. Laughter more menacing than anger.

The Federal Raids

In the last dreary stretches of the strike came the raids of the Department of Justice. Workers suddenly disappeared from their homes. Fathers of families disappeared. Some were steel workers and some were not. In the minds of the steel strikers the raids were part of the program of violence.

The local government had been against them—the burgesses and sheriffs and police.

The State had been against them. The State Government was the friend of the steel masters, not of the steel workers.

Now they felt that the United States Government was against them too. It was the logical sequence in the workers' minds.

The spies of the United States Steel Corporation passed on tips to the Department of Justice. The Department of Justice acted on accusations given by illiterate undercover men. So in each town some workers were spirited away. No one heard of them. Their families knew nothing of their whereabouts. Some of them were deported. But after having been held for months in prison, others returned. No charges could be preferred against them.

Long after the strike was over I heard the workers talking about these raids. In the unexplained disappearance of inoffensive neighbors there was an element of terror that had captured their imagination. A striker in East Youngstown talked to me about it.

"Is it free country when they take feller out of his house at night and take him away? On my street live feller. They come in middle of night; they smash his trunk with ax; they look for gun; he ain't got none; they throw his things around; they take him off with them. Where is he? No one can know. His wife she cry and cry. They got five children. My wife take her in something to eat. My wife try to comfort her, but she cry and cry, 'Where is my man? How I going to live?'

"The priest say to me:

" 'John, did police have warrant when they came to his house?'

"Don't need warrant to search Hunkie's house. Maybe another time they come and take me away. So now I go to steamship company. Pretty soon I get back home again.

"When I come to this country first time I am going right off to be citizen, I think. Pretty soon this is my country, I think. Pretty soon I buy me house. You know what the first English is I learn? 'Damn Hunkie'—that's what I learn. That's what they call me. But when war come, Hunky good enough to fight.

"You hear what feller say is difference between government in Austria and government here. He say, there Kaiser rule; here mill boss rule. That's true. We gotta do what

mill boss say. If we join union boss call us 'damn Hunkie' and kick us out. Is that free country? So now I go home to my country, Bohemia. My country more free country than this."

There are thousands of competent workmen in his state of mind. They do not believe in American democracy. Why should they? They have never seen any in the steel towns.

These raids at the last end of the strike were the final proof to the foreigners that every element of government was against them. They did not understand it. Why had the government done this? The foreign workers do not distinguish sharply between Socialists and Communists. Most steel workers come from countries where the Socialist Party has a powerful representation in their parliament. In their minds the raids were another evidence that government is used to oppress workers.

National Committee Office

Through a fine sifting rain that froze when it reached the pavement and the grime-covered piles of half-melted snow, I went over to Homestead with an organizer who carried bulletins. It was during the last days of the strike.

The office was filled so full with men that you could not move. They seemed to be waiting for something; they had an anxious air.

There were an organizer's desk, a bench, a chair or two,

but there were no chairs for the men to sit on. I asked why.

"They'd raid us if we had chairs. They'd call it holding a meeting," the organizer answered. There was not even a bulletin board. The Constabulary would not let them chalk up their news. They had four walls; they had nothing else.

The room was always filled with men, men milling around, men waiting for something; a restless atmosphere. I have seen crowds like this in steamship offices—people waiting for news of missing vessels. I have seen people like this in France before the time of the Communiqué, people waiting for news of battle.

People fearing news of disaster but hoping for good news wait as these men waited.

They milled around; they shifted from one place to another. A few drifted out. More crowded in. They did not talk much, but there was a low hum in the air, a vibration that was disquieting. The room was filled with suspense. One giant of a man with a blonde mustache like a lambrequin talked earnestly with a fellow squat as a dwarf. The squat man's chest was like a cask, his hairy arms hung to his knees. He felt me looking at him. He made his way to me through the crowd.

"Ma'am," he said, "pretty soon we gotta win, ain't we? Pretty soon we gonna get what we want." He spoke with intensity, but there was no conviction in his voice. He was pleading with me to reassure him. He was repeating to me what all the men in the room were saying:

"Now pretty soon we must win." They all said it without conviction. Shipwrecked men on a raft at sea must talk in this tone as they look around the empty horizon.

I had no words to answer him. I had seen the book of the United States Steel Corporation. I had seen a strike broken on the Mesaba Range.

Three times a week these bulletins went to the strikers. They were printed in seven languages. Not all the strikers got this bulletin. It was the one slender link which they had between them; it was the only thing which many had to make them know that their fellow workers in other towns stood by them.

Every one's face was turned to the organizer. Every one's hand was outstretched for bulletins. Men went through the steaming crowd with bundles of them. The talk stopped. Men were reading. Talk began again. Comments rapped out sharply in half a dozen languages.

Here in Homestead and Braddock the men stuck. In the towns where the mills had always operated the strikers stood firm. They looked failure in the face, but to the end they filled the organizer's office, in their desire for freedom. They packed the room tight with revolt. They were men ready to pay in terms of themselves for their beliefs. What they believe was not formulted into a dogma. It was not narrowed down to trade union bargaining. They were dumb, inarticulate, but they were vibrating in tune to the great urge that is lifting up the workers around the world. They could lose the strike, but they could never lose the consciousness of their combined strength.

The Dying Strike

The strike was dying. It was bleeding to death like a living thing. Seep, seep, seep—courage oozed from the men. Seep, seep, seep—they sagged back to work. Each man gutted of his self-respect was a victory for the Steel Companies. Strikes are broken by breaking men's courage; strikes are broken by making men play traitor to what they believe.

The men knew this. Sullen, ashamed, they trickled back. Want drove them, and fear, and the doubtful faces of their women. There had not been enough of anything except men—not enough money, not enough organizers, not enough interest on the part of the Internationals involved in the strike, not enough support from official labor.

Yet when the National Committee met in Washington on December 12th, 109,000 men were still on strike. The strike had not been stamped out. It had not been smothered. But it had been overwhelmed by the great forces against it; it was killed by the indifference of Instituted Labor. So it died, from a slow bleeding. The steel workers' sobbing in the dark hall outside the National Committee Office in Youngstown will always be to me the sound of the dying strike.

CHAPTER XVIII

STRIKE DERELICTS

Scrapped

THE strike was over. Many men got jobs. Few got back their old ones. As much as possible the strikers were degraded. The old men were often not taken back.

I went with Father Kazinci to visit the homes of some of those who were in trouble. We were looking for a man called Shapiro. Where Shapiro lived we had to find out from the Albanian butcher, who was on the same street with the Albanian Coffee House. Among the welter of races in Braddock there is a colony of these mysterious people. We found Shapiro's house on Halkett Street, the street that skirts the tracks of the Baltimore & Ohio, separated from the shining rails by an iron fence. Like most steel workers in this part of Braddock, Shapiro lived in two rooms. The trains screeched past him perpetually. He had stepped out and one of the children was sent to fetch him.

"What will we do, Father?" his wife asked. "They won't give him back his job."

The room was like any ordinary steelworker's room—

a kitchen, a shelf on which was a crucifix and candles, a lounge, holy pictures, curtains in the window. A room that tried to spell home.

"What breaks his heart," the woman went on, "is our Anna. She works in the glass works. She isn't strong. She's supporting us both. Her hands are cut. If they won't take him back, what can we do? She comes back so tired, Father. It breaks her father's heart."

Shapiro himself came in. He limped.

"Were you hurt in the mills?" Father Kazinci asked him.

Shapiro bent over, rolled his pants up and his stocking down. Jagged across his leg was the white scar of an old wound.

"After that," he said, "I was never strong again."

"Did you get compensation?"

"No, Father."

"Did you try to?"

He shook his head. "They said they would take care of me."

"And now they won't take you back again after the strike?"

"No."

"Were you active in the strike?"

"No, Father."

"Were you a union man?"

"Not before the strike. When I first came to this country there was a strike in New York where I was working. I did not strike. The men beat me up. This

time when a strike comes, I said to myself, 'Better I strike with the other men'."

He looked at us with innocent puzzled eyes. One could see he had understood nothing. The industrial machine of America had caught him up. First he had broken some rule he did not understand and suffered for it. Now he had broken a rule on the other side and suffered for it too.

"How many years have you worked in this country?"

"Over twenty years. They won't take me back," he repeated. "They said, 'No work for you.'" He looked at Father Kazinci as though he had asked him to unravel the problem of his life. Why had he been beaten in the first place; why had he been discharged in the second place; why was life so hard? Who could tell him? He had worked always, and now his little daughter must work with bleeding hands.

The Riddle's Answer

We walked down Halkett Street to another house. Here an old man was waiting for us. This old couple was living in one room. The bed had been moved down to the kitchen, as the upper room had been rented to a lodger. It was neat, but the room gave the impression of a place filled with grief. The man, gray faced and gray of hair, stood silent. The woman talked in her own tongue.

"Do you remember the funeral?" Father Kazinci turned to me. "Do you remember the funeral they broke up? It was this man's son. He died of rage. Early in the

strike he was beaten over the head by a trooper. One day the troopers were riding up and he flew at them; he attacked them with his bare hands. He tried to drag the Cossack from his horse. Suddenly he fell back. People around thought he had been shot, but he had had a stroke. They brought him here. He died in this bed."

Now I understood the big funeral. I understood those silent, dripping men. They had come out to pay tribute to anger that had been greater than fear. This man had done what so many of them had itched to do; he had attacked the state troopers with his bare hands. He had expressed the hate that was in the hearts of all of them. He had risked his life to do it, and he had paid with his life. So when he died Monessen and Donora and Charleroi and East Pittsburg had come out

Now his father could not get work again. He was sixty-nine years old and had worked for thirty-five years in the Edgar Thompson Works. The son had left a widow with five children.

The old man's daughter, who lived near at hand, had been left a widow also. She had a daughter who worked in the Westinghouse, and a boy who worked by day in the library and went to night school. There were four other children. Fifteen people were living from the labor of two young girls, and the money earned by young John who worked in the library. The gray woman put this question to Father Kazinci:

"What shall we do if our father is not given work again?"

He had no answer for her question. The other children are too young to work. The mothers with little children cannot go to work. At most they can take in some washing or pay their rent by taking lodgers. What is to be done if the grandfather is not taken back? During the strike they spent their savings. What is to be done? He is sixty-nine years old and he has worked for thirty-five years in one place. To the question: "Were you active in the strike?" he had a negative. His son had been active.

The problem was an unsolvable problem. We saw before our eyes two households disintegrated. We saw children deprived of the chance to live. Women with children driven to sending those children to institutions. What was to be done if there was no work?

Life-Long Protest

We went into another house. A young woman sat washing her feet. There is no privacy in the First Ward.

Between the two windows was a photograph of the U. S. S. *Sigourney*. This was a son's ship. He had been a volunteer. He had been discharged from the navy five months. He didn't get his old job back when he returned to the steel mill; he was for some time out of work. Now he was working again. So was Steve's son-in-law.

Old Steve alone had not been taken on again. The son-in-law, and Mike, the sailor, also strikers, had been given jobs. Not such good jobs, not their old jobs—but they were working. Old Steve had been scrapped.

Twenty-three years ago he had fallen and broken his foot in the Edgar Thompson Works. He got no compensation he said. He was as sound looking a man as a winter apple, ruddy cheeked with innocent blue eyes. His wife resembled him as it is said that husbands and wives in their old age grow to resemble one another. His wife and he had the back tenement and his married daughter the front—good people, sound people. For twenty-five years he had gone back and forth to the Edgar Thompson Works. Almost in his first year he had had the accident.

There were nine now in his family, including a daughter working for the Westinghouse Company. He was not a citizen. He could not read and write. He could rear sons to volunteer in our navy, and he and his wife could bring up their daughters to be fine women.

Other men were worse off. There was no one dependent on him. He had sons to look after him, but a man in his late fifties cannot face inaction even though hunger does not stare him in the face.

Sweeter old people I never saw, none who looked more innocent or more defenseless than Steve and his wife. I have never seen a house kept with such exquisite perfection as this little old woman kept her two rooms. Its clean smell was like a perfume. The rugs on the floor were handwoven. As in every other house, here was a shelf covered with a deep-laced crocheted fringe on which stood the crucifix backed by tall candles. These are the usual possessions. But in this house order and spotlessness had a deeper significance. It was as if this woman had spent

her life in a passionate protest against Braddock's dirt and Braddock's ugliness. She had been too busy keeping things clean, raising her children, to learn much English.

Old Strikers

Two old men who could not get their jobs called at the rectory. They were magnificent looking men. Both had shoulders as wide as doors. One was fifty-six. He had worked with the Edgar Thompson people for thirty-two years. The other was fifty-three. He had worked for thirty-four years with the same firm. One had six children and the other seven. Each one owned his own house. One had a six-room house on which he had already paid his whole life's savings.

I asked one why he was not a citizen. He answered:

"Ma'am, I work for twenty years at night."

The only time he saw his children was at breakfast. He returned to sleep as their day began, and had worked Sundays for twenty years. Now after thirty-two years he also had been scrapped. He had the only other explanation that I heard beside that of age for failing to get his job back when the younger men were returned. A near neighbor of his was a spy in the pay of the company. People knew the man was a "spotter." When organization was going on in the works, he had been an informer. On a certain day this man got drunk. He flourished a pistol around and swore at the strikers and said he would shoot any ——— ——— ——— who didn't go back

to work. The old striker went to the police station. He reported that there was a man behaving in a dangerous and unseemly fashion. The company's spotter was arrested and fined.

That he believes is why he and his son are not reinstated. He had caused the arrest of a drunken spotter.

These men in their fifties look strong enough now to do any kind of a day's work. If the company kept them on, later they would not work so well. After a lifetime of work in this country, after raising children, contributing sons to the army of this country, there was no more work for him.

CHAPTER XIX

ALIENS

Boy Without a Country

AS Father Kazinci and I walked through the Braddock alleys we bent our heads to the thin rain without speaking. I had been accompanying him on a round of parochial visits, and we did not talk because there seemed nothing adequate to say.

At last he spoke: "If you analyze what we have heard to-day, it means something like 'No advancement for the Slavs.' They cannot help giving them jobs, but they will give them as poor ones as they can. I wonder if John has his job." He looked toward a boy coming toward us.

"He was my most brilliant pupil. When he had to leave school, I wept. He comes from a remarkable family. There are six boys. Each of them deserves a college education. I have to face no more bitter thing than to see my ambitious boys swallowed up by the mills. It's hard with all of them. But this boy could not be kept down. When the strike came, he was on the road to advancement to become assistant chemist."

We were face to face with him now.

"How do you do, Father?"

"How are you, my boy? Did you get your old job back?"

"No, Father."

"Why not?"

"I don't know, Father; they wouldn't give it to me."

"Were you active in the strike?"

"No, Father."

"You didn't stay around strike headquarters a lot?"

"No, Father; I was home."

"When you went for your job, what did they say to you?"

"They said, 'What's your name?' and when I told them they said: 'Nothing doing for you. We're not going to have nothing but Americans in the chemical department after this.'" He had spoken in a quiet, lackluster voice, and now bitterness broke out of him. "What makes an American?" he demanded. "Wasn't I born here? Weren't all of us born here? Ain't the boys like my brother Joe who volunteered as good Americans, even if they have got 'ski' or 'ko' to their names—as good Americans as the fellows called White or Smith? I'll say we are! They said so too while the war was on. You remember the poster 'Americans all!' Say, Father, the man who made that picture ought to work in Carnegie Steel. He'd learn the difference between an American and a 'damn Hunky' quick enough!"

Again there was nothing to say. We had no answer for his bitterness. The thin rain fell on us. Tow-headed children made a cheerful slide down the alley. An old woman,

her head tied in a kerchief after the fashion of Central Europe, toiled along, carrying a load of wood. A silence as frozen as the rain held us. The boy broke the silence.

"What nationality do you suppose my little son is?" he asked. "He is only the third generation here. I guess he ain't got any country."

We walked on down the bleak alley, with its swarming tow-headed children who had found a plaything in the brittle surface of the icy pavement.

"That boy's mother is a wonderful woman," said Father Kazinci. "She has eleven children, and each new one as it comes along she shows to me as a gift from God." We turned down a passageway which led down hill into a courtyard. The courtyard was lined around with smoke-blackened pens where the tenants kept hens and animals. The heaps of filth defacing the court were now covered with a thin purifying coating of ice. Five paces from the front door, on a slightly higher level, stood a privy common to several families. Near the door was a bench, on which sat a row of fowls, like everything else, shining with ice. Over the door projected three blackened boards—a shelter from the burning sun, when the sweltering court became a brick oven, but now cutting out what little light there was. The brick house had been painted light blue, which gave it a cheerful air.

A smell of old grease, of drying clothes, rushed fiercely at us as we opened the basement door. A wide-bosomed strong woman who rocked a cradle greeted us. She was still comely, almost handsome. She broke into a torrent

of greeting in her own tongue. Father Kazinci translated:

"She says, 'Father, you see me here in my bare feet and my rags. I have been here twenty-two years, and I live as you see. This is all I have—these rags, this cellar, my eleven children. Every night I bless God, who has kept them in good health. For twenty-two years, Father, I have worked from morning till night, and often late at night, but after all this work we have nothing to give them but this."

Striker's Christmas

There were two small windows that did not open, and a slit of a window high in the rear of the room. The door opened flush on the soggy courtyard. In the room were a stove, a table, four chairs, benches, and the inevitable row of holy pictures. On the floor above the father and mother slept in one room with the five younger children. In the attic slept the four boys. Always there had been a new baby. Before they could escape from this cellar another baby always came.

Peter and Lisa, the babies now in the room, had come the same year. John at thirteen had had to leave school because other children were being born to the Savkos.

Lisa stood on the bench, her head silhouetted against the window. In her hand she held two flat pieces of gum; with these she made a cross against the window-pane, then a T, then an angle, then she put them carefully in her pinafore pocket. Then, tranquil, serious, absorbed, she

looked at a book. She continued in her little world while her mother talked.

Father Kazinci translated: "Would I live here if I could get out? Would I live here, would I remain where the dirty water of the privy overflows and crawls over the court under the doorsill until it makes a pool on my kitchen floor? Is that a view for children to look at year after year, year after year? To keep them clean I must wash out in the yard. Look, missus, this is my apron!" She brought a stiff oilcloth apron, still frozen. "I wash out in the cold, so I won't splash water over my children, so they can have a dry place to play. Eleven souls to keep clean here in Braddock means work."

She illustrated with wide gestures:

"On Christmas we were all here, Johnny and his wife and the baby. Father, you see this little room and this small table, these few chairs? Fifteen souls. Some ate. I cleared away. Others sat down. The little girls sat on the stairs. Two boys used the black stove for a table. The children laughed and were happy because there was goose and stuffing, but my heart was heavy. Must the children eat from the floor like pigs even on this day of our blessed Lord? It was no comfort to me that He was born in a manger. For this one day I would have shortened my life if only we might all of us, young and old, have celebrated Christmas by eating together at one table. I thought how beautiful if we could all have sat down at once, each in his own chair, each with his own plate and knife and fork, on this one holiday. What happiness!"

A Worker's Story

The woman's arms had always been full of babies. You could have told that by the way she gathered up Lisa while she went on with her story.

There was in the story one green spot of delight. Once she and her husband had $180 saved. They had gone to Holyoke and visited a sister. They would have stayed, but there was no work for the father to do. That had been eighteen years before, but the memory of the wide Connecticut Valley and the sweet New England towns still gladdened her heart.

The children began coming in from school. They dragged a little table out from underneath the big table and sat about it, playing. Happiness survived in this meager room. It was a home made abidingly good by that woman. Here people were kind to one another. The little girls played together quietly with the harmony of children accustomed only to love.

The boys came in. The baby waked up. The mother took him in her arms. The window was a luminous square of dark blue. She sat there, silhouetted against it, enormous, her head erect in the defense of her own. As the dusk deepened the children came to her, crowding themselves into her flanks. The three little girls stood on one side, Steve next, and then George.

She was talking: "Ah, my dears, that was a terrible time —yes, yes, that was the time! That was the time! Despair stared at me. Despair was stronger than God's hand.

Despair walked at night beside me. They laid him off —they laid off our father! *We* were on strike just now, but it was the company that was striking *then!* I had Annie in my arms, another coming, seven mouths to feed! What can I do? I sat one day for six hours in the boss's office. 'I will stay on my knees here,' I thought, 'until he takes our father back. Even if it is a slack time, there is some work they must give him to do,' I thought.

"It was at that time I used to buy rags from the ragman—the rags the Americans had thrown away—and wash them clean and patch them and make clothes for the babies. What else could I do?

"Johnnie found himself work at night, so he could study at day. For a year until he was fourteen he held the red hot links of chains in a pincers from five o'clock at night until three in the morning, but the hot metal hurt his eyes. His eyes were always red, but he would not give up. You remember, Father, he did this for a year. He would fall asleep over his books, poor boy!

"Oh, my dear, misfortune has followed me from the day I left my own land. One misfortune after another. Now it is Stevie who must set up pins in the bowling alley from six till half-past eleven at night."

"I get five dollars," said Stevie.

"How could I help it, Father?" the woman continued. "It is always the same, so many mouths to fill." She looked at us with her extraordinary intensity and cried out: "Would to God I had never come! Would to God I had

never seen this land! Would to God I had remained where, if we had no school, we might have had the blue sky and the fields! What good does it do them—the few days of schooling? With them it is a thirst and a hunger for knowledge, and I must see them starve for the knowledge they cannot have. What is the meaning, Father? Why should things be so?"

The door opened, and Johnnie came in. Upstairs the father and Andy, the third son, were sleeping—both on the night shift. They were all gathered under one roof now, this family of aliens who had lived among us for twenty-three years in so precarious a fashion. John spoke.

"Father," he said, "I found out the name of the American fellow who got my job." He spoke without irony. "It was O'Rourke."

They Want to Go Home

There are thousands of women who echo this cry: "Would to God I had never come!" There are thousands of men and women homesick for their own lands; and they are going as fast as steamships will take them. The emigration officials, the officials of steamship companies, the priests, will all tell you so.

The easy answer to this is: "Well, if they don't like it here, let them go." But the wheels of industry do not turn of themselves. They grind the raw products of this country into wealth because we have had plenty of foreign workers to turn the wheels. We need the workers.

Textile mill, mine, and steel mills recruit them in their own countries.

Now the homesick people from Central Europe are going back to their lands. They have been cut off from their families for years. They are taking with them strange memories and strange stories—memories of mounted constabulary chasing workers from streets, memories of raids and of arrests, memories of mothers and children crying about a vanished father.

Many steel workers are going home to tell their friends that the government of America is against the workers. There are thousands upon thousands who learned to believe last winter that this is a government for rich men.

On their return home these emigrants will tell the stories of raids, imprisonments and deportations for political reasons. And they will tell them in every hamlet in Italy; they will be told in the Balkans and in Central Europe out to the Baltic Sea. These stories will lose nothing by the telling. Those who listen will believe that America is a land of despotism where an unbridled brutality is permitted to the police.

As long as exchange is high there will be a backward flow of foreign workers. Instead of people coming as to a promised land, the immigrants will come in a suspicious and hostile frame of mind. Instead of settlers we will have gold seekers.

They Will Wait

Weeks after the strike was over I walked again down Braddock's alleys. The outward flow had set in. Many of my acquaintances had gone back to their own countries. The derelict old man, whose son had died of rage, had gone. The family was scattered.

There were no outward changes. The women's curtains were still drying on frames. The children played in the litter. Smoke rolled down the valley. Gusts of white steam arose behind the mill walls.

A woman was sitting beside her door with a child in her arms, another playing at her feet. Her mild eyes gazed on vacancy, as though not seeing the monotony of the squalid street that ended with the red cylinders of the mills, vast structures rearing their monstrous tank-like bulk far into the air and above which rolled the somber magnificence of the smoke.

The woman had the patience of eternity in her broad quiet face.

"I have waited," she seemed to say. "I am eternal. This strife is about me and mine. If my brothers do not change this, my sons will. I can wait."

THE END

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